

facto consenting to the President's capitulation in Helsinki. They cannot stand by. The American people will not allow it.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, on healthcare, ever since Republicans have been handed the keys to both Houses of Congress and the White House after the 2016 election, they have engaged in a protracted campaign of sabotage against our healthcare system. Premiums are going up, coverage is going down, and it is all falling in the laps of our Republican colleagues in the House and Senate.

President Trump and congressional Republicans proposed legislation that would have gutted Medicaid and allowed insurers to charge more and deny coverage just because a person had gotten sick. The legislation would have excluded critical benefits and imposed lifetime or annual limits on care.

Under cover of night, the Republicans dismantled the healthcare law's coverage requirement without putting anything in its place.

The Trump administration canceled the Federal program that helped low-income customers afford insurance and expanded the availability of junk insurance plans that sucker Americans in with low premiums but that hardly cover anything. When people have these plans, they ask: Why did I even buy insurance? They were duped.

Now, worse yet, the administration has directed the Justice Department to stop defending the constitutionality of protections for Americans with preexisting medical conditions—turning its back on the most popular and humane advancement in our healthcare system over the last decade.

I would say to my Republican friends: Go to your constituents. Ask if people have someone who is sick in their families. You will get a lot of hands. Then ask them if they should be excluded from gaining health insurance to help that sick member and see how many support these ideas.

If they try to do this in the dark of night, it is not going to work. In August, we Democrats are going to be talking about this over and over again. Believe me—this will probably be the most important factor in the 2018 election as the American people will rebel from the taking away of healthcare.

Imagine going back to the days when a mother with a child who has cancer can no longer find affordable healthcare for her daughter. When hard-working Americans who fall on hard times are made to suffer by being denied healthcare coverage precisely because they need it, how wrong, how backward, how immoral. That is where President Trump wants to take us, and that is where all of our Republican colleagues seem to be following.

Later this morning—actually, right now—a group of Democrats is announcing how we plan to fight back against

this lawsuit and preserve the protections for up to 130 million nonelderly Americans who have preexisting conditions. The elderly, fortunately, are protected since we still have Medicare, despite some efforts by some on the other side to cut it back.

As millions of Americans watch their healthcare costs go up, as they read the news about the latest Republican effort to undo healthcare protections, they fear for the future and wonder who in Washington will be fighting for them. In November, they will have the chance to vote for a party that will check the President's dangerous healthcare sabotage, that will work to bring down costs and improve quality, that will never undermine the protections of Americans with preexisting conditions.

I look forward to the response to my colleagues' announcement.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ryan Wesley Bounds, of Oregon, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Arkansas.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to express my support for the 20,000 men and women of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They work hard every day to keep drugs off our streets, to stop human trafficking, to protect our communities from gang violence, and, yes, to enforce our immigration laws. Theirs can be a thankless job, but they do it with courage, dedication, and professionalism. So I, for one, want to say thank you.

I wish to point out the overwhelming support that House Republicans showed for ICE yesterday, which stands in stark contrast to the contemptible display put on by House Democrats. On a simple resolution merely expressing support for the men and women of ICE, only 18 Democrats voted yes, 8 skipped the vote, 34 voted no, and 133 Democrats voted present, which is the same thing as no. That is a pretty sad state of affairs. Thirty-four Democrats condemned the men and women of ICE, and 141 Democrats don't even have the courage of their conviction—they don't

even have the guts to vote yes or no—because we all know that Democrats, in their heart of hearts, want to abolish ICE. The way they tell it, ICE is a rogue agency driven by hatred and spite to tear apart communities.

Congressman POCAN of Wisconsin said that ICE is "ripping at the moral fabric of our nation."

Congresswoman JAYAPAL of Washington said that "ICE is out of control."

Congressman BLUMENAUER of Oregon calls ICE "toxic."

The senior Senator from Massachusetts said that we should replace ICE "with something that reflects our values," which I suppose means that the 20,000 men and women of ICE don't measure up to the professor's definition of our values. I have to ask, isn't the rule of law one of those values? Because ICE's job is simply to enforce the law and to protect our citizens from crime.

In the last year alone, ICE arrested more than 125,000 illegal aliens with criminal records. Those illegal aliens were responsible for more than 80,000 DUIs, 76,000 dangerous drug offenses, 48,000 assaults, 11,000 weapon offenses, 5,000 sexual assaults, 2,000 kidnappings, and 1,800 homicides. Yes, that is right, almost 2,000 souls would still be on this Earth but for those illegal alien criminals. ICE's investigative arm seized more than 980,000 pounds of narcotics last year. These men and women are on the frontlines of the war on drugs and the opioid crisis in particular. Do the Democrats really believe we should put all these efforts on hold?

This call to abolish ICE is so irresponsible that even some Democrats—those not running for President or beholden to the radical left—are speaking out against this.

Jeh Johnson, President Obama's former Secretary of Homeland Security, said that it "is not a serious policy proposal" and "would compromise public safety." He pointed out that even those who opposed the Vietnam war wouldn't have demanded that we abolish the Department of Defense.

Eric Holder, President Obama's former Attorney General, said, "I don't think that substantively or politically that makes a great deal of sense," calling it "a gift to Republicans."

Sarah Saldana, who ran ICE under President Obama, has called it "nonsensical."

Perhaps the most insightful comment came from former Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut. He said, "This makes no sense unless you no longer want any rules on immigration or customs to be enforced." And that, I would contend, is the whole point.

Those who want to abolish ICE just want open borders. The very bill House Democrats have introduced to abolish ICE doesn't even say which Federal agency should assume its critical law enforcement duties. They leave it up to a commission. The reason, I submit, is that they don't really care. Their obsession with open borders is so great

that they are willing to risk public safety to achieve it. These irresponsible politicians should know better. They aren't worthy to lead the brave, hard-working men and women of ICE. These officers are just trying to do their jobs and to keep us safe. On behalf of a grateful nation, I conclude by again extending them my deepest thanks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I join the Senator from Arkansas in commending those who are involved in law enforcement, risking their lives for the safety of this Nation at all levels—Federal, State, and local. They put their badges on every single day and risk their lives for us, and that is a fact.

Within the Department of Homeland Security, there are men and women who are conscientiously trying to keep America safe. I commend them as well. I believe they are doing their job as they understand it, and they are risking their lives many times to achieve it, not only to stop the illegal flow of drugs into our country but to deter crime and to ferret out criminals where possible. They risk their lives to achieve that goal.

I have not joined in a call for the abolition of ICE, but I will not join in a call for the adoration of ICE because of one specific issue. The zero tolerance policy of the Trump administration resulted in our agents of the Department of Homeland Security forcibly separating children from their parents—forcibly separating up to 3,000 children from their parents.

I saw some of those kids separated by that agency. They were toddlers and infants. Some were being held by the care workers whom I happened to visit in Chicago. They were little babies taken from their mothers—toddlers, children 5 and 6 years old, separated by this agency under the President's zero tolerance policy. There were up to 3,000 of them, according to the administration's own estimates.

Had that happened before? Only rarely, but it became the policy of this administration until there was such an uproar in the United States and around the world that President Trump reversed his position on zero tolerance.

Reversing the position did not return the children to their parents. It took Federal courts to do that—one in particular, in San Diego, where the judge called the representatives of ICE, Health and Human Services, and all the other agencies involved in these children being removed forcibly from their parents and gave them deadlines to return the children to their parents. It was then that we discovered something about this agency. It was then that we discovered that they didn't keep a record of the parents and kids.

If you place an order online to Amazon or some other source and the next day you want to check on the status of your order, you use your tracking

number, and they will tell you where your package is. There was no tracking number when it came to these kids. If you decide that you are going to order a pizza and it seems to take a little too long and you call the pizza parlor, they can generally tell you where the delivery person is. The same thing is true in so many other areas.

Why, then, did this agency, which my colleagues are now coming to the floor claiming such great praise for, ignore the obvious? This agency, the Department of Homeland Security, ended up setting free 3,000 children into care facilities around the United States of America and didn't keep records of the parents.

We asked them several weeks ago, downstairs—all of the agencies, including ICE, referred to by the Senator from Arkansas: OK, let's get down to basics. How many kids are we talking about?

They wouldn't give us a number.

How many kids are under the age of 5? Those are the ones whom you have a deadline to reunite under the Federal court order in San Diego.

They couldn't give us a number.

Then, how many parents can you identify who actually had their kids taken away?

ICE said: We can identify 10.

Ten parents, 3,000 kids—I am not making this up. This is exactly what they said.

They said: We have 10 parents in custody. Those are the ones we can identify.

Two weeks passed, and we had another briefing this week. The numbers are now more complete. There are some 2,500 kids separated from their parents, spread around the United States.

What happened to the parents who lost their children?

The explanation from ICE was that they abandoned their kids and left.

Does that sound reasonable? Does that sound honest? You take the child away from the arms of a parent and then the parent says: I am leaving the country.

That might have happened in some cases, for reasons I don't know, but it is an outrageous suggestion. What it reflects is incompetency. How in the world can you take a child away from a parent, forcibly take them away, and not keep an adequate record for their reunification? How can you do that? Common sense and common decency suggests that you would do it.

I am not going to join in any resolution applauding that action by any Federal agency—the Department of Homeland Security, ICE, or other agencies. To me, it is a stain on the reputation of this Nation, one that we need to quickly resolve by reuniting these children with their families as quickly as possible.

You see, it isn't just a question of a holiday for these kids. Pediatricians have come forward from the American Academy of Pediatrics and have said

that what we have done is institutional abuse of children.

This separation is not just another day in the life of this 2-year-old, 5-year-old, or 8-year-old. This separation is something that is causing trauma within their own minds.

Have you read the stories about the reunifications, where some of the parents come back, finally get their children, and the children will not even come to the parents? They don't quite understand what just happened to them. They think the parent might have just decided to give them up.

There they were alone and by themselves at that tender age. Can you imagine that for your children or your grandchildren? I can't.

We did it as part of the official government policy of the Trump administration under zero tolerance.

When some of us come to the floor to question the actions, the conduct, the management of ICE, we have good reason to do it. I hope for the people within that agency who are doing their jobs conscientiously that we can at least be honest in saying that this policy is one which doesn't deserve praise and doesn't deserve our adoration on the floor of the Senate or the House.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

S. RES. 582

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a matter of extraordinary importance to the future of American democracy and, in fact, democracies all over the world. At the Helsinki summit on Monday, President Trump embarrassed our country, undermined American values, and openly sided with Russia's authoritarian leader, Vladimir Putin, against the U.S. intelligence community's unanimous assessment that Russia interfered in the 2016 Presidential election.

Senator JOHN MCCAIN is right when he said: It was—

[It was] one of the most disgraceful performances by an American president in memory. The damage inflicted by President Trump's naivete, egotism, false equivalence, and sympathy for autocrats is difficult to calculate. But it is clear that the summit in Helsinki was a tragic mistake.

That is not BERNIE SANDERS talking. That is former Republican Presidential candidate Senator JOHN MCCAIN.

On Tuesday, after a strong international backlash, Trump, in a bizarre statement, claimed he misspoke and, of course, blamed the media for reporting what he said, even then he could not help but suggest that the electoral interference "could be other people also" and not just Russia.

In an interview last night, Trump changed his answer yet again and acknowledged, in the meekest way possible, that, yes, Russia meddled in our election, and, as the leader of Russia, Vladimir Putin is responsible.

This is a step forward, but it is not remotely sufficient. Who knows what tweet the President will release tomorrow? He seems to come up with a new response every few hours.

Today, we face an unprecedented situation of a President who, for whatever reason, refuses to acknowledge the full scope of the threat to American democracy. Either he really doesn't understand what is happening—and that is possible—or he is under Russian influence because of compromising information that they may have on him or because he is ultimately more sympathetic to Russia's authoritarian oligarchic form of government than he is to American democracy.

Whatever the reason, Congress must act now. Democrats must act and Republicans must act if we are serious about preserving American democracy. We must demand—and I know this is a radical idea—that the President of the United States represent the interests of the American people and not Russia.

Let us be as clear as we can be. Russia has been interfering not only in U.S. elections but in the elections of other democracies—the United Kingdom, France, Germany.

I yield to the Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend, the Senator from Vermont, for this outstanding resolution. It is a resolution. I don't see who can object to it. We ask for five things in this resolution: that our government accept the assessment of our own Intelligence Committees about Russia's interference; that we move aggressively to protect our election systems; that the sanctions that this body passed 98 to 2 finally be implemented by the Trump administration; that there be no interference in Mr. Mueller's investigation; and that there must be cooperation.

Who in America would object to that? Maybe a small group of hard-right ideologues, but no one else.

Who in this body will object to it? This is an outstanding resolution.

I know my friend from Vermont would agree with me. We need action in addition to resolutions, but this is an excellent start. I urge all of my colleagues to support this fullheartedly. Our country is at risk.

The Senator from Vermont is sounding a clarion call and saying in a bipartisan way that we should strengthen our country, not weaken it, as the President has done over the last week. I hope this will get unanimous support from every Member of this body—whether they be Democrat, Independent, or Republican; whether they be liberal, moderate, or conservative. If you love America, if you care about our security, support this resolution.

I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank the Democratic leader for his strong efforts on this enormously important issue. I want to reiterate that this really is not a Democratic resolution. If there is any resolution that should be bipartisan, this is it. My Republican colleagues believe in democracy. I know that. We believe in democracy. Together, we and the American people must make it clear that we will not allow Russia or

any other country on Earth to undermine our democracy.

Let's be very clear that Russia has not just been interfering in U.S. elections but in elections of other democracies around the world—the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, to name just a few countries.

Russia's goal is to advance its own interests by weakening the transatlantic alliance of democracies that arose after World War II, while also inflaming internal divisions in our country and in other countries. We should also be clear that this interference is directed from the very highest levels of the Russian Government. Last week, Special Counsel Mueller announced a set of indictments of 12 members of Russia's military intelligence service, the GRU. There can be no doubt that given the nature of the Russian Government, Vladimir Putin was directly involved in this effort.

But our concern is not only what has already happened; more importantly, it is what could happen in the future. What happened in 2016 was an outrage, but we have to make sure it does not happen in 2018 and future elections.

Last week, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, a former Republican U.S. Senator, raised the alarm on growing cyber attacks and threats against the United States in a range of areas—a range of areas, not just elections—including Federal, State, and local government agencies, the military, business, and academia, saying that the situation is at a “critical point.” Coats said Russia is “the most aggressive foreign actor, no question, and they continue their efforts to undermine our democracy.” Coats compared the warning signs to those the United States faced ahead of the September 11 terrorist attacks. This is a clear and present threat to our democratic system and those of our allies.

Ultimately, of course we want a peaceful relationship with Russia. We do not want a return to the Cold War, and we surely do not seek any type of military conflict. But at the same time, we must be very clear that we oppose what Putin is doing, both in terms of his foreign policy and his domestic policy.

On foreign policy, we will not accept Russia interfering in the elections of democratic countries, stoking political tensions by promoting hatred and suspicion of immigrants and minorities, and trying to undermine longstanding alliances between democratic allies.

In 2014, in violation of international law, Russia invaded neighboring Ukraine and annexed the Crimea region.

Russia has assassinated political opponents abroad, most recently through the use of poison in Salisbury, England. The British Government concluded in that attack that it was most likely carried out by Russia's military intelligence service.

Domestically, Putin has undermined democracy in Russia, crushing free

speech, jailing political opponents, harassing and assassinating journalists who criticize him, and increasing persecution of ethnic and religious minorities.

On Monday in Helsinki, President Trump had an opportunity to speak out on all of these things and more, to confront Putin about these destabilizing and inhumane policies. He chose not to.

Well, here is the main point: If for whatever reason the President of the United States is not going to do what is right, Congress must do it. Democrats must do it. Republicans must do it.

The Congress must make it clear—and this is the resolution I am introducing and asking for unanimous consent—the Congress must make it clear that we accept the assessment of our intelligence community with regard to Russian election interfering in our country and in other democracies. Does anybody doubt the truth of that?

The Congress must move aggressively to protect our election system from interference by Russia or any foreign power. Does anybody deny the importance of that?

The Congress must demand that the sanctions against Russia, as the Democratic leader mentioned, which passed with 98 votes, be fully implemented—98 votes on that issue.

The Congress must make it clear that we will not accept any interference with the ongoing investigation of Special Counsel Mueller, such as the offer of preemptive pardons or the firing of Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and that the President must cooperate with this investigation. Time and again, I have heard Republicans, including leaders, make it clear that there should not be an interference in that investigation. There is nothing new here on that point.

Finally—nothing new here, either—the Congress must make it clear to President Trump that his job is to protect the values that millions of Americans struggled, fought, and died to defend: justice, democracy, and equality; that he is the President of the United States and his job is to protect the interests of the American people, not Russia.

Tweets, comments, and press conferences—and I know many of my Republican colleagues have been involved in those activities. They are fine. They are constructive. But we need more from Republican Senators now. It is time for the Senate to rein in the President's dangerous behavior.

If their leadership—Senator McCONNELL—will not allow votes on this extraordinarily important matter, then my Republican colleagues must join with Democrats to make it happen, or all of their fine-sounding words of concern will become meaningless.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 582

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, as in legislative session, the

Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 582, submitted earlier today. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, Trump derangement syndrome has officially come to the Senate. The hatred for the President is so intense that partisans would rather risk war than give diplomacy a chance. Does anybody remember that Ronald Reagan sat down with Gorbachev and that we lessened the nuclear tensions? We need to still have those openings.

Nobody is excusing Russia's meddling in our elections. Absolutely we should protect the integrity of our elections. But simply bringing the hatred of the President to the Senate floor in order to say "We are done with diplomacy. We are going to add more and more sanctions"—you know what. I would rather that we still have open channels of discussion with the Russians. At the height of the Cold War, Kennedy had a direct line to Khrushchev, and it may have prevented the end of the world.

Should we be so crazy about partisanship that we now say "We don't want to talk to the Russians. We are not going to have relations with the Russians"? We should stand firm and say "Stay the hell out of our elections," but we should not stick our head in the ground and say we are not going to talk to them.

I would like to see the Russians leave Ukraine. I think we could do it through diplomacy. We are not going to have it if we don't talk to them.

I would like to see the Russians help more with North Korea, with denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We are not going to have it if we just simply heap more sanctions on and say that we are not going to talk to the Russians and that anybody who talks to the Russians is committing treason.

For goodness' sake, we have the former head of the CIA, John Brennan, gallivanting across TV—now being paid for his opinion—to call the President treasonous. This has to stop. This is crazy hatred of the President. Crazy partisanship is driving this.

For goodness' sake, we don't excuse Russia's behavior in our election, but we don't have to have war. We can still have engagement. We have engaged Russia throughout 70 years, while also acknowledging the imperfections of their system, the parts of their system we vehemently disagree with—the lack of freedom, the lack of human rights. Yet we had open channels of negotiation, open channels of communication.

I could not object more strongly to this.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the Senator from Kentucky just told us that he wants dialogue with Russia, he wants diplomacy with Russia, and that he thinks it is important that we communicate with Russia. I agree. Who disagrees with that? There is not one word in this resolution that suggests that the United States of America should not aggressively engage in diplomacy with Russia to ease the tensions that exist between the two countries. What the Senator said is totally irrelevant to what is in this resolution.

What this resolution says is that we are going to tell Russia: Stop interfering in our elections.

What this resolution is about is telling Russia to stop interfering with the elections in democratic countries all over the world.

What this resolution is about is saying that we should implement the sanctions overwhelmingly voted for by Congress.

What this resolution is about is that we will not accept interference with the ongoing investigation of Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

What this resolution says is that the President must cooperate with the investigation of Mr. Mueller.

That is what this resolution is about. It has nothing to do with ending diplomacy with Russia at all. That is inaccurate.

I would hope that, if not today, in the very near future, Republicans will join Democrats and do the right thing in our effort to preserve American democracy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 583

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, we are here to put forward a resolution and ask unanimous consent for its adoption. This is the Flake-Coons resolution, which Senator COONS will speak on and I will take it from there.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor with my colleague Senator FLAKE from Arizona to send a strong, clear, and, importantly, a bipartisan message to the American people that we stand with the men and women of the Department of Justice and the men and women of the U.S. intelligence community.

We support the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in our elections, and we must act—and act unequivocally—to hold Russia accountable for its actions.

Just 3 days after the U.S. intelligence community issued a detailed and staggering finding that led to an indictment against 12 Russian military intelligence officers for interfering in our 2016 election, President Trump stood shoulder to shoulder with President Putin and failed to challenge Putin's claim that his government played no role in the effort to undermine our democracy.

In fact, when asked, at the time, whether he believed Putin's denial or

the U.S. intelligence community, President Trump said: "I have confidence in both parties."

He has subsequently walked back those comments, but I think it is important that the Senate be on the record as saying that our intelligence community is clear, our law enforcement community is clear, and today the Senate should be clear.

So today Senator FLAKE and I are putting forward a resolution that, in its language, commends the Department of Justice for its ongoing investigation into Russia's interference in our last election—the one that led to last week's 11-count indictment, offering the most thorough and detailed accounting to date of Russia's complex effort to sow doubt and create chaos in the months leading up to our last election.

The resolution also reaffirms the intelligence community's assessment of Russian interference and asserts that Russia must be held to account for its actions. This can be accomplished in part by immediately and responsibly implementing sanctions provided for in the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA, which this body passed 98 to 2 this summer.

Finally, following the President's summit with Putin in Helsinki, today's resolution calls for prompt hearings and the release of notes to better understand what the two leaders discussed and may have agreed to during their one-on-one meeting, which ran for over 2 hours.

I am encouraged by hearings that have already been scheduled, but I think it is important that it be clear that our Senate seeks a role in engagement and oversight.

Congress and the American people deserve to know what promises or concessions may have been made to President Putin, and thorough hearings with senior officials, including Secretary Pompeo, are critical.

This resolution is a first step—a good first step—but we need to be clear-eyed. President Putin of Russia will not stop until we stop him. We know we face continued threats to our elections in 2018 and beyond. Just last week, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, our former colleague here in the Senate, cautioned that the warning lights are blinking red again on cyber attacks against our Nation. He said:

These actions are persistent, they are pervasive, and they are meant to undermine America's Democracy. Attacks on our country's digital infrastructure [are] made principally by Russia.

He said:

Russia is the most aggressive foreign actor and the worst offender.

So we know that we continue to face hostile threats. FBI Director Chris Wray said just yesterday: "Russia is still working to sow division in the United States and continues to engage in malign actions against our country."

So we need to join arms and look forward to protecting our next election. Today's resolution is an important first step, but I think we should work together to take up and pass the DETER Act, introduced by Senators RUBIO and VAN HOLLEN, to deter Russia from interfering in our next election.

I think we should take up and consider the Lankford-Klobuchar Secure Elections Act to strengthen election cyber security.

Of course, I would like to see my Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act taken up as well. We can build on \$380 million invested in election security, grants provided by this Congress to the States back in March to help bolster their election systems against threats.

It is important to remember that Putin and Putin's Russia are attacking other democratic processes throughout Europe. As Americans, as Senators, we need to stand up and fight for our democracy and the rule of law.

I had a memorable conversation with the Ukrainian leader last year, who said to me: If you don't defend your own elections, your own democracy, how can the rest of us count on you to defend ours?

This resolution makes clear that, on a bipartisan basis, we intend to defend our democracy. Russia's attacks on our last elections where attacks on every American—Republicans and Democrats. The threat is great, it is pressing, and it demands that we act.

Today's resolution is a first step and an important one, and I call on my colleagues to join us in supporting it. If there is any Senator who disagrees with this very basic resolution, I look forward to hearing their reasons.

Let me close by thanking my colleague and friend Senator FLAKE, from Arizona, for having taken the initiative and the lead in introducing this important resolution. We may not agree on everything, but we agree on this important principle: We should stand up and be counted in defense of our democracy.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

MR. FLAKE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Delaware, Mr. COONS, for helping to get together and working on this resolution and for working with his colleagues.

I hope that we can pass it today. There may be an objection to moving forward. If there is, we will bring it back again and again. This needs to be passed. The Senate needs to speak here.

Mr. President, in his dystopian novel "1984," George Orwell wrote:

The party told you to reject the evidence with your eyes and ears. It was their most final, essential command.

Well, what we saw on air this week in Helsinki was truly an Orwellian moment. What we saw earlier this week in Helsinki is what happens when you wage war on objective reality for nearly 2 solid years, calling real things fake

and fake things real, as if conditioning others to embrace the same confusion. Ultimately, you are rendered unable to tell the difference between the two and are at critical times seemingly rendered incapable of thinking clearly—your mind a hash of conspiracy theory and fragments of old talking points deployed in response to a question no one even asked. Ultimately, you fail to summon reality in the face of a despot in defense of your country.

It wasn't a hard question. An American President was invited by a reporter to denounce the Russian attacks on our elections and, in doing so, to defend the country that he was elected to lead. This should have been not much of a test at all for any American President. Yet it was, and our President failed that test.

The findings of our intelligence community regarding the Russian aggression are not matters of opinion, no matter how powerful and strong Putin's denial. To reject these findings and to reject the excruciatingly specific indictment against the 12 named Russian operatives in deference to the word of a KGB apparatchik is an act of will on the part of the President.

That choice now leaves us contemplating a dark mystery: Why did he do that? What would compel our President to do such a thing?

Those are questions that urgently beg for an answer, and it is our job to find that answer. But what isn't a mystery is that, by choosing to reject objective reality in Helsinki, the President let down the free world by giving aid and comfort to an enemy of democracy. In so doing, he dimmed the light of freedom ever so slightly in our own country. Such is the power that we vest in the Presidency. Such are the consequences when a President does not use that power well.

I can add no further to the extraordinary and thoroughly justified response of my fellow Americans from across the political spectrum to the events in Helsinki, ranging from heartbreak to horror. But I will say that if ever there was a moment to think of not just your party but for the country, this is it. This is not a moment for spin, deflection, justification, circling the wagons, forgetting, moving on to the next news cycle, or for more of Orwell's doublespeak. No, when the American Government offers an onslaught on unreality, it puts the whole world at risk.

That is the lesson of Helsinki. That is the dose of reality that hit hard. We have indulged myths and fabrications and pretended that it wasn't so bad, and our indulgence got us the capitulation in Helsinki.

We in the Senate who have been elected to represent our constituents cannot be enablers of falsehoods. This bipartisan resolution from the Senator from Delaware and me, which we have here today, commends the Department of Justice for its thorough investigation that has led to the indictment of

12 Russian operatives who on behalf of the Russian Government interfered in the 2016 election. It acknowledges that such efforts by the Russian Government to undermine our elections, as confirmed by our own Director of National Intelligence, continue.

Specifically, the Flake-Coons resolution rejects the denial of election interference by Russian President Vladimir Putin, something that our President failed to do when given the opportunity in a public forum in Helsinki on Monday.

This resolution calls for the full and immediate implementation of mandatory sanctions, passed by a vote of 98 to 2, to deter and punish election interference by the Russian Government.

If there are waivers that are needed—and there are some needed for the Indian Government, for example, for weapons they purchased from the Russian Government or for hardware—there is a waiver process already in law for that, and I would support that.

Finally, the resolution calls on the relevant committees of the Senate to exercise oversight, including prompt hearings and obtaining relevant notes and information to understand what commitments were made by the President in the summit and the impact it will have on our foreign policy going forward.

The Russian Ambassador last night said that "important verbal agreements were made." We need to know the details of those agreements.

Empirical, objective truth has taken a beating for the last 18 months. I said from this pulpit in January that "the dissemination of untruths has the effect of eroding trust in our vital institutions and conditioning the public to no longer trust them."

As we saw in Helsinki on Monday, entertaining the untruths of a dictator has the same effect. Passing this resolution will let our constituents, the administration, our allies, and our adversaries know that here in the Senate we do not entertain the deceit of dictators.

The truth is that Russia interfered in our elections in 2016, and these efforts continue. Accepting that truth is the first step in preparing us to confront this malign activity. Let's pass this resolution.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 583, submitted earlier today. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table with no intervening action or debate.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me first thank the Senator from Arizona and

the Senator from Delaware for expressing all of our concern about Russian interference in the 2016 election. It is absolutely clear they did, and the President has said as much on a number of occasions.

Now, I agree, in Helsinki he was less than clear about that, but he came back and said that he misspoke and reaffirmed his earlier position that, yes, the Russian Government had attempted to interfere in the election, although nobody disputes the fact that they were unsuccessful in changing a single vote or affecting the outcome. Ironically, the very same investigation which has made clear that the Russians did attempt to disrupt the election has also made clear there is no evidence of collusion that anybody has uncovered to date.

My concern with this resolution is that it is purely a symbolic act, and what we need to do is not just offer symbolic resolutions on the floor. We need to do the hard work Senators have to do through regular order. In other words, our committees that have jurisdiction over these issues ought to be permitted to call the witnesses and ask the hard questions and develop the record before we go on record as to a resolution like this.

I would point out that the indictments that were referred to, apparently, according to published reports, Rod Rosenstein, the Deputy Attorney General, asked the President before Helsinki if he should withhold the announcement of those indictments or go ahead and release them before the summit. The President said: No, go ahead.

Anybody who read the 29 pages of the indictment, issued at the request of Robert Mueller by a grand jury in the District of Columbia, knows there is chapter and verse of how Russians attempted to interfere with the election. It is a good and important read. The President knew that before he went to Helsinki. That gives me some confidence that he did, indeed, misspeak, especially in light of his subsequent affirmations of Russian interference in the election.

I happen to be privileged to sit on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. We have been conducting a bipartisan investigation of the Russian matter for the entire time the President has been in office for the last year and a half. We already issued some preliminary reports. The way to do our work is through bipartisan committee work—have the witnesses come and testify, ask them hard questions, and render our judgment.

I know Secretary Pompeo is coming before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee sometime next week. He ought to be asked hard questions. I am confident he will respond to those questions. That is how we get the information we need.

Let me just say that I think we should consider sanctions—not some sort of sense-of-the-Senate resolutions that have no sting or no impact, cer-

tainly no deterrent effect on what we all want, which is to discourage Russian involvement in our 2018 elections. That is why the majority leader today asked the chairman of the Banking and Foreign Relations Committee to hold hearings and recommend additional measures that could respond to or deter Russian malign behavior. We ought to do our work through our committees of jurisdiction.

When we rush to judgment and do resolutions like this, we can inadvertently make mistakes. Let me point out one that is in this resolution. There is a reference to Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which passed the Senate 98 to 2, to deter and punish election interference by the Russian Federation. There is a provision in the current conference committee on the Defense authorization that would issue a waiver of that act to our partner India. If we want to encourage countries like India to come partner with the United States of America—the world's largest democracy and the world's oldest democracy—then we ought encourage that movement toward us and away from the Russian Federation. I worry there is no reference in here to the waiver provision in the Defense authorization conference committee that India has asked for and that Secretary Mattis has requested Congress grant.

All I am asking for is a little bit of caution in the rush to issue a resolution. No. 1, I don't think we acknowledge the full picture, but we also don't commit our work to the committees that have jurisdiction over these matters to do it carefully, thoughtfully, and in a bipartisan way so we come up to the best solution to the problem.

I think this is the wrong way to go about it. I think our committees ought to continue to do their work—Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Armed Services Committee, the Foreign Relations Committee, and the Banking Committee. We ought to come up with the right kind of bipartisan answer, which I think could well include sanctions against the Russian Federation to deter them from meddling in our 2018 elections and beyond. I am confident they will continue until we stop them from doing so.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I think it is regrettable this was objected to. We will bring it back. The majority leader said this is just a symbolic vote. It is. Symbolism is important.

Obviously, we have underlying sanctions we ought to fully implement. If there are waivers needed, there is already a waiver process in the NDAA authorization. I support those waivers with regard to India. This does not affect that. This says, in a symbolic way, that we in the Senate don't buy Vladimir Putin's rejection or his denial of election interference.

That was put in question this week, whether our government believes that or not. We in the Senate should stand and say: We don't believe it. We know the intelligence is right. We stand behind our intelligence community. We need to say that in the Senate.

Yes, it is symbolic and symbolism is important. Our agencies of government need to know that we stand behind them. That is what this is about.

I hope we will pass this. I note, regretfully, that there has been an objection to it, but we will bring it back. I believe this should pass, and I believe it ultimately will pass.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding Senate rule XXII, postcloture time on the Bounds nomination expire at 1:45 p.m. today; further, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. RES. 584

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of the Bounds nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and proceed to the immediate consideration of a Schumer resolution that is at the desk; further, that the Senate immediately vote on the resolution; that if agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

S. RES. 583

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I join my colleague from Arizona in briefly remarking on my regret that our resolution was not adopted today.

It does call for the full implementation of mandatory sanctions as discussed at some length. It does not call for the reckless implementation of mandatory sanctions.

There is a significant range of sanctions already provided for in this law, adopted 98 to 2 by this body, that have not yet been adopted. I recognize that this resolution, standing strong behind the Department of Justice, the intelligence community, and its ongoing investigation is, as was referenced, a symbolic act, but there are moments when symbolism and standing together are important.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with my colleague and friend from Arizona to ensure that this resolution is adopted, that the American people and the men and women of our Federal law enforcement agencies and our intelligence community understand that this body strongly supports them and their work and sees clearly the ongoing and continuing threat to

our democracy posed by President Putin and Putin's Russia.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, before I talk about the resolution Senators MENENDEZ, SCHATZ, and I have authored that will be voted on at 1:45 p.m., I would like to say a few words about the work the Senators from Delaware and Arizona did and my severe disappointment that there was objection from the Republican leadership.

The bottom line is very simple. President Trump has put our country in a foreign policy crisis. President Trump has weakened the security of this country. A resolution is the minimum we can do. We should be acting.

The idea that we cannot even pass a resolution in this body because of the objection on the other side, when this was done in a bipartisan, careful way by the Senators from Arizona and Delaware, shows something very bad. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are so cowered by a President that they cannot stand up for national security. They cannot stand up to Vladimir Putin, just as the President seems not to be able to.

I have one more point. From what I am told, one of the major objections from the other side was that Congress wished the contemporaneous notes from that secret 2-hour meeting be made available. That is key.

What are they hiding? What are they afraid of? The American people have a right to know what went on in that meeting, particularly when President Putin gets up and talks about some agreements that it seems not even our high-ranking officials in the State and Defense Departments and intelligence agencies know about. This is amazing.

We have come to a really low moment in this body when a bipartisan resolution that is rather modest and limited—I had talked to the Senator from Delaware. He knows I wanted much more in this resolution, but in an effort to get something done, we limited it.

In my view—the view of most Americans—the notes should be made available. The translator should be made available. The translator wasn't specifically referred to in this resolution, but when they talked about relevant people coming, my view—and I believe the view of the Senator from Delaware—was that would include the translator. I am not sure if it was the view of the Senator from Arizona. It doesn't matter. We are not even passing this resolution.

I have to say, this was a moment for bipartisanship. This was a moment for America pulling together. This was a moment, when the President doesn't served the country well, that Americans of all parties, all ideologies come together and fill that void and undo the misdeeds that occurred in Helsinki.

Unfortunately, because of weakness, fear—my guess is, if you looked inside

the hearts and minds of every Member on the other side, all but maybe one or two would feel this is the right resolution, but they are afraid. Fear will not get us anywhere. Letting a bully push us around, meaning President Putin, as he pushed President Trump around, will not serve this country well. It is a sad moment that this resolution was rejected.

S. RES. 584

Madam President, before I yield to my good friend, the hard-working and very able ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I want to talk about our resolution which we are going to vote on. Lord knows what would happen if we couldn't have even gotten a vote on that.

The idea that an American ambassador, who served us so well, should be brought before Putin and his minions to be questioned, when there is no charge against him, no issue against him—it is not like the 12 Russians who are indicted for trying to interfere with our elections. It is not even an analogy. There is not an evenness. President Trump amazingly called this an "incredible offer." Our President is saying that one of our Ambassadors being hauled before an authoritarian regime that twists the truth, that lies at will, that even seems to kill people they want to with poison in other countries is an incredible offer?

Well, this resolution is a fine resolution. It will pass. It doesn't undo what just happened. It doesn't make up for the fact that our colleagues are afraid to take real action, even a resolution that posits action in terms of the major misdeeds at Helsinki. At the very least, we are protecting the integrity of the men and women who serve us, because if today it is the Ambassador, tomorrow it could be somebody in the military or somebody in the intelligence agencies or elsewhere.

This resolution is very clear. What it says is, when President Trump called Putin's offer an "incredible offer," he was incredibly wrong. No President can put one of our fine servants at risk who has worked hard, in this case, for the diplomatic corps. This resolution is a bare minimum of what we should be doing here. I am glad it will be on the floor, and I suspect it will pass—hopefully, unanimously.

I yield to my colleague from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I am very pleased to join with the distinguished Democratic leader in co-authoring this resolution.

S. RES. 583

Madam President, before I speak to it, I do want to speak to the Flake-Coons resolution.

Certainly, I would have supported it; although, I believe it is the minimum of what this body should be expressing after what we saw in Helsinki. This is a moment for bipartisanship and for patriotism because what I saw in Hel-

sinki speaks to the opposite of standing up to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

In the majority whip's objection to the resolution coming to a vote, I find it interesting that, among other things, he was talking about our having more sanctions against Russia, which I will speak to shortly. We are in the midst of developing a new, strong package of sanctions as it relates to Russia. So I embrace and welcome him to that effort if he seeks to actually see real sanctions against Russia.

We have sanctions. There are sanctions that passed by 98 to 2 in this institution and that passed overwhelmingly in the House of Representatives, which forced the President to sign it as a result of there having been overwhelming votes. These were sanctions that were largely mandatory but have not been fulfilled. So we could start off by having a robust engagement of the existing sanctions.

I am not quite sure how we start being tough on Russia. One of the elements of those sanctions was to go after Russia's sales of defense weapons. Yet here we are, and we are already looking for waivers. There is a difference between a country that, maybe, has a long history of buying Russian military equipment, but the S-400—a new anti-defense system—is a new version. That is not a legacy issue. I am not sure how we are going to tell one country it can buy the S-400 but tell another country it can't. It doesn't work. That is how sanctions begin to crumble at the end of the day. Yet I welcome the response that we should be having new sanctions.

S. RES. 584

Madam President, as it relates to this resolution, it is outrageous that the White House would not instantaneously and firmly dismiss a proposition that Russian prosecutors question a former U.S. Ambassador. Again and again, we have seen President Trump take Vladimir Putin's word. It is unconscionable that this White House would give anything other than a full-throated defense of America's Foreign Service, like Ambassador Mike McFaul, who has served our country with honor and distinction.

The reason Putin doesn't like Mike McFaul is that as our U.S. Ambassador, he stood up for democracy and human rights in Russia; he stood up to the Russian regime; and he promoted American values and ideals. He spoke truth to power inside Russia. That is why Putin wants him. Congress shouldn't have to tell America's President to stand up for America's public servants and its diplomatic corps, but apparently we have to.

President Trump has repeatedly dismissed Russia's attack in 2016 and shrugs off the threat it poses today, despite all of our intelligence agencies and the Director of National Intelligence, just days ago, saying there are red blinking lights about Russia's continual engagement and interference in

the elections that will take place 110 days from now.

This week, he has continuously and directly contradicted his own national security advisers and, instead, has embraced the line of Putin and Russian intelligence. Now, I know they have been trying to clean it up. Yet he has said it so many times and in the same way he said it in Helsinki. That is what he really believes. Now for him to say something that is different—wrong time, wrong continent, not too much. He has spouted talking points that have sounded like they have come straight from the Kremlin. He has shown a willingness to accede to Putin's requests to interrogate Americans, a willingness to accept Putin's denials about Russian interference, a willingness to attack NATO allies like Montenegro, and a willingness to be a supplicant to Putin's views.

The President keeps claiming he has been tough on Russia. No. It is Congress that has been tough on Russia by its passing CAATSA, the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, with broad and deep bipartisan support. Yet the White House hasn't taken it seriously. It has ignored a series of mandates in the law. The clear tone and intent that came from the Helsinki summit was one of accommodation, not of pressure.

I don't see any other way forward, other than through further congressional action, to forcefully call out and address the administration's willful paralysis to Putin's abhorrent behavior. To date, our efforts have been transformative, but just as the administration has been prepared to find ways that allow Putin to circumvent the law and to avoid implementing mandatory provisions of CAATSA, we must be equally prepared to adjust and adapt by closing those loopholes.

That is why I will soon introduce comprehensive legislation to increase pressure to actually implement the law and increase pressure on Russia for its aggression against the United States and our allies. Among the considerations we have for this new legislation are to increase sanctions on Russia's energy sector, to increase sanctions on its cyber sector, to increase pressure on Russia's oligarchs and those who are closest to Putin, and to look at Russia's sovereign debt as a target.

We cannot wait to see whether Russia will attack us in the 2018 election. We know it is in the midst of making that a reality, and we need to ramp up the pressure. We can't afford to wait.

Based on this President's behavior, we also need to protect our institutions here at home. That is why we want to include protections for the Office of Special Counsel. The President has done more to target Bob Mueller than he has to go after Vladimir Putin, and this must stop. This effort must be bipartisan, which is why I look forward to working with my Republican colleagues who truly want to see us fight back on Russia and nearly all of whom

voted to increase sanctions on Russia last year and place more authority for sanctions alleviation in the hands of Congress. They were right to support such measures in July of 2017, and God knows it would now be right to step up and defend America's interests.

It is time to show the American people that we can be patriots, not just partisans. It is time to show the world that we can put our country over party. It is time that we defend America's democratic institutions against Russia's continued aggression. I look forward to the resolution and its vote, and I urge everyone to join us in approving it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, we will vote today on the confirmation of Ryan Bounds to the Ninth Circuit. He has been nominated to fill the vacancy left by Judge O'Scannlain. Mr. Bounds once served as a law clerk to Ninth Circuit Judge O'Scannlain.

Mr. Bounds is highly qualified to serve on the Ninth Circuit. A native of Oregon, he attended Stanford University and Yale Law School. He has dedicated his career to public service and has served in government for the past 14 years. The last 8 years were as an assistant U.S. attorney in Oregon.

I have listened to my colleagues on the other side voice their opposition to Mr. Bounds. Interestingly, none of them cite anything Mr. Bounds has done in his legal career as a reason for opposing his nomination. Instead, they focus on two things. First, they say we shouldn't confirm Mr. Bounds because his home State Senators didn't return their blue slips. Second, they say some of Mr. Bounds' college writings were insensitive. So I am going to start with point No. 1 on which they base their opposition to him.

As I have explained so many times on the floor of the U.S. Senate and in the Senate Judiciary Committee—and I don't know how many times to the multitudes of journalists who are on the Hill—my blue-slip policy is the same as all but 2 of my 18 predecessors who were chairmen of the Judiciary Committee over the 100-year history of blue slips. Like Chairmen Ted Kennedy, Joe Biden, and ORRIN HATCH, I will hold hearings for circuit court nominees who have negative or unreported blue slips if the White House has consulted with the home State Senators, and I will not allow Senators to abuse the blue-slip courtesy for political or ideological reasons.

In the case of Mr. Bounds, the White House sought the Oregon Senators' input, seriously considered the one

candidate suggested by the Oregon Senators, and waited several months for the Senators from Oregon to establish their judicial selection committee, which is quite a tradition in that State. The selection committee itself even recommended Mr. Bounds. Yet the Oregon Senators still didn't return their blue slips.

They say it was because Mr. Bounds didn't disclose some of his college writings to the selection committee. There is a very good reason he didn't—the selection committee never asked for his college writings. In fact, Senator WYDEN's staff instructed Mr. Bounds not to disclose them. Moreover, the Oregon Senators refused to ever meet with Mr. Bounds during this whole process.

It has been misleadingly said this will be the first time in modern history we will have confirmed a judge without there having been at least one positive blue slip from the two State Senators. My Democratic colleagues have only themselves to blame. The way the blue slip used to be enforced was through the 60-vote filibuster, and that was done away with in November 2013, led by the then-Democratic majority and Senator Reid.

For example, Chairman HATCH held hearings for five nominees in 2003 and 2004, despite there being the lack of a positive blue slip from either home State Senator. These nominees were voted out of committee. Then Senate Democrats blocked these nominees on the floor by using the 60-vote filibuster. But my Democratic colleagues abolished that filibuster, as I said, in 2013 for the reason that they needed the votes and the freedom to pack the DC Circuit with liberal judges who would uphold Obama's regulatory schemes.

Leading this effort was none other than Senator MERKLEY of Oregon, who argued that 41 Senators shouldn't be able to block a Senate majority from confirming judges. Now they have a different point of view. Now he argues that he alone should have the right to block Mr. Bounds from even getting a hearing in the Judiciary Committee.

In November of 2013, I told my Democratic colleagues that they would regret abolishing the filibuster just to stack the DC Circuit Court of Appeals with their friends. Now, obviously, today, as they consider the Bounds nomination, they know they made a mistake.

Turning to the only other criticism my colleagues have made about Mr. Bounds, which is in regard to his college writings, I don't believe that misguided statements made in a college newspaper 25 years ago should disqualify Mr. Bounds. I hope we don't live in a world where controversial things that we write in college end our careers forever. This is especially true with our kids and grandkids now in the era of social media.

For example, a few years ago, just when the same thing came up on Justice Wright going to the Minnesota

District Court, I voted and supported her despite very controversial writings she had in law school. We shouldn't assume that views expressed years ago during college and law school represent the nominee today.

Mr. Bounds testified that he regretted much of what he wrote in those op-eds.

We received numerous letters in support of Mr. Bounds' nomination from people who have known him personally throughout his life. We received a letter from some of his classmates at Stanford. And before I quote, it is kind of like—these sound like they were his friends in the dormitories. I never was a dormitory student, but I imagine you really get acquainted with people there. This is what they had to say about Mr. Bounds:

We have become aware of a handful of controversial op-eds and articles Ryan wrote for *The Stanford Review* during that time. None of us believes that these writings reflect Ryan's character, either then or now. All of us remember our dorm-mate fondly.

We are a diverse bunch. Yet Ryan never failed to treat all of us with courtesy, respect, and civility, regardless of our respective genders, sexual orientations, skin colors, religions, ethnicity, or any other characteristics.

There is not, and never has been, a racist, sexist, homophobic, or bigoted bone in Ryan Bounds's body.

Mr. Bounds has also been a community leader, promoting diversity and equality. As a member of the Multnomah Bar Association's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, Mr. Bounds spearheaded programs to expose underprivileged young people to the legal profession. He mentored young scholarship recipients and helped those same people navigate law school admissions and law school. He expanded low-cost CLE offerings and organized anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training.

Mr. Bounds is imminently qualified to serve on the Ninth Circuit. His college writings do not represent who he is today. His professional accomplishments and exemplary public service speak much more loudly to his character and integrity.

I strongly urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support Mr. Bounds' confirmation today.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Madam President, I would like to say one thing about another nomination issue. I understand that so far, no Senate Democrat has met with Judge Kavanaugh. They are apparently awaiting their marching orders from the minority leader. Well, the American people elected each one of those Democratic Senators to represent them, not the minority leader. And when Senate Democrats have largely already made up their minds to vote against Judge Kavanaugh and none of them have even met with him, their demand for a paper chase beyond relevant material sounds more and more like a demand for a taxpayer-funded fishing expedition.

REMEMBERING GOVERNOR BOB RAY

Now, Madam President, I would like to address my colleagues in the U.S. Senate on the life and death of Governor Bob Ray, a wonderful Governor for the State of Iowa over a long period of time. I wish to honor him in this way.

I wish to pay tribute to my good friend and an exceptional Iowan whose life and legacy will be remembered in my home State for generations to come. As the people of Iowa mourn the loss of our 38th Governor, I would like to share about a few ways that Robert D. Ray made Iowa a better place to grow. Looking back at his lifetime of service, it seems nearly impossible that one person could wear so many hats and reach the highest rungs of distinguished service in both his private life and in the public sector.

After graduating from high school in 1946, Bob enlisted in the U.S. Army to serve his country that way. He returned from service and earned undergraduate and law degrees at Drake University in Des Moines, IA. He married the love of his life, Billie, and together they raised three daughters.

In addition to serving 14 years as our State's chief executive from 1969 to 1983, Governor Ray also served as our State party chairman at the age of 35, chairman of the National Governors Association, interim mayor of Des Moines, 11th president of Drake University, U.S. delegate to the United Nations Conference on Refugees, and CEO and board member to a number of non-profit and for-profit corporations.

Reading such an outstanding resume, one might come to the conclusion that this Iowan must have an outsized ego to match. To that, I can personally affirm that Bob Ray was a humble leader driven by a servant's heart. He brought honesty, dignity, and integrity to the campaign trail and, in turn, to State government.

His policy achievements as our 38th Governor made government work better for the people by reorganizing State government, such as the creation of the department of transportation, and modernizing the National Guard. Those are just a few of the reorganizations. But through doing this, he strengthened rock-solid Iowa values in education, conservation, good government, and fiscal stewardship. It was Governor Ray who signed Iowa's—we call it the bottle bill. You get a redemption for a can you return instead of throwing it in the dump. He signed it into law to keep our roadways clean and our State looking beautiful.

Arguably, the lasting measure of his governorship is defined by moral leadership, and particularly as evidenced after the fall of Saigon in 1975.

As a result of the ending of the Vietnam war, Governor Ray's actions transcended the riverbanks of America's heartland to reach thousands of refugees across the world. Those refugees were fleeing communism in Southeast Asia. Governor Ray persuaded Presi-

dent Ford to allow Iowa to welcome the Tai Dam to Iowa, allowing this close-knit ethnic group to stay intact and to resettle in Iowa.

In 1978, we had another wave of Southeast Asians who were desperate to escape communism in South Vietnam. They became known as the boat people who put their lives in peril for the pearl of freedom that we offer in America. Bob Ray put his political life on the line to open Iowa's homes and hearts to rescue them from suffering and death. In so doing, he saved the lives of thousands of people, including generations of new Iowans yet to be born.

Yet again, Governor Ray responded in 1979 to another humanitarian crisis going on in Southeast Asia by launching the Iowa SHARES Program. The acronym "SHARES" stands for Iowa "Sends Help to Aid Refugees and End Starvation." That very first year, the program raised more than \$600,000 in less than 1 month—small donations to send food and medicine to starving people on the Cambodian border. Volunteer nurses and doctors from Iowa also went to save these people, who suffered under the harsh Khmer Rouge regime of Pol Pot.

When one of those members of the boat people first learned of Governor Ray's passing, she was moved to tears. Now a wife and mother of five children, she prayed for Governor Ray, in fact referring to him as "Saint Bob Ray." She attributed his courage and generosity to saving thousands of people just like her.

At his funeral, Senator ERNST and I saw a whole part of the church filled with these Southeast Asians who very much wanted to express their appreciation for Governor Ray's leadership by being there at that funeral.

In 2005, Governor Ray received Iowa's highest civilian honor, the Iowan Award. It is a well-deserved honor for this legendary man of honor. He is a statesman, a humanitarian hero, and, of course, to those who loved him the most, he was a husband, dad, and grandpa.

Years after Governor Ray left the Governor's mansion, called Terrace Hill, he launched the Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University. That center's mission is dedicated to improving civility and developing ethical leaders at home and throughout the world. And for all of us, we know that in a society less civil now than it has been throughout most of the history of our country, that center is going to serve a very needed purpose. For those who know the story of Bob Ray, his ray of light connected with the center will inspire generations of leaders for years to come.

Barbara and I join our fellow Iowans in extending our condolences to Billie and the entire Ray family. We will miss this extraordinary Iowan. Our State benefited in countless ways because he shared his gift so generously to make Iowa an even better place to grow for generations to come.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that three eulogies that highlight Governor Ray's life as a Governor, political humanitarian, and a man with strong family values be printed in the RECORD.

These eulogies are from David Oman, who served as chief of staff to Governor Ray; Ken Quinn, a former U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia who worked on the refugee resettlement as a member of the Ray administration and today serves as president of the World Food Prize Foundation in Des Moines; and the third is from Scott Raecker, who serves as director of the Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University. I hope my colleagues will read these eulogies because there is no way that anything I say today can do justice to what they said in their separate eulogies.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ROBERT D. RAY EULOGY

DAVID OMAN

One more time, for the last time, Bob Ray has done what he did so often in life—bring people together, in this church, at the Capitol last evening, on social media, and in conversations.

Lessons from his life have been learned and re-learned this week, none better than the simple reminder that a keen mind, warm heart, and a bias for action—by one person—can cause great change, and uncork goodwill among so many.

Gov. Ray's life ended without regrets and remorse. Embracing his example, we're better able to live our lives with renewal and resolve.

Yesterday, a motorcade brought the Ray family past many touchpoints in Bob's and Billie's lives—Terrace Hill, Drake University, and Theodore Roosevelt High School.

President Roosevelt, in 1910, a year after leaving the White House, spoke in Paris about leadership, and making a difference.

He said, 'above all stands character, a man's force and courage, his good faith and sense of honor . . . self-restraint, common sense, the power of individual responsibility, and acting in conjunction with others.'

TR didn't know it, but he previewed the life of Robert D. Ray, or as we called him, RDR.

Another President Roosevelt, Franklin, died at the end of World War II. FDR and RDR had something in common—a very real human touch. During FDR's funeral, an aging African American man wept inconsolably on a Pennsylvania Ave. sidewalk.

A reporter approached timidly and asked, 'Did you know the President?' The man said, 'No . . . but he knew me.'

Good leaders, good people, know, in a broad sense—and in the moment—what other people feel and need.

Bob Ray had that quality. He knew Iowans, or as he liked to say 'our Iowans.'

People who had a two-minute phone call or 20 minute meeting, or just a handshake at the Fair, felt they mattered and were the most important person to Gov. Ray at the time . . . and they were.

Sometimes, Bob Ray wasn't aware of his impact.

Two years ago, at Wesley Acres, Gov. Ray wasn't in room 146, nor physical therapy or the lunch room. A nurse and I couldn't find him. It turned out he was in P.T.; he told us we'd been lost.

Then the nurse said to me 'Gov. Ray changed my life . . .' I asked her to tell me more.

It seems her late teen life was not good in 1969; she doubted herself. Then she listened to Gov. Ray's first Inaugural Address on the radio. She added, 'He talked about the future. He said the future was going to be better and brighter. I felt he was talking about me and my life. He gave me hope. My life turned out alright, and now, I get to help him.'

Gov. Ray spoke with thousands of Iowans through four of his campaigns in seven years, ending the two-year term era. Iowans quickly got to know his openness and decency . . . civility and sincerity . . . humanity and humor.

And who didn't love his smile?

That genuine persona stood in stark contrast to the erosion of trust in a Washington awash in Watergate. In '74, Bob Ray stood against the tide. He won 59% of the vote when nine other GOP governors were swept away. He acquired more momentum, if not a mandate.

Governor Ray knew how to campaign. He knew how to govern. And, he knew the difference.

The late Lt. Gov. Arthur Neu said, 'Ray would take his time making decisions, but when his mind was made up, he was a tough as nails.'

The other evening, I wrote down Ray policy initiatives and stopped at 30. Some were ahead of their time, some were copied by other states. They covered tax policy, streamlined government, education, conservation, human services, human rights, public safety, agriculture and transportation.

I can't list them all today. As they say about baseball stats . . . 'you can look 'em up.'

The Gov. would at times borrow or co-opt good ideas from Democrats. They didn't know whether to laugh or cry, but he always gave them credit.

Gov. Ray looked beyond the next year or cycle. He paired with Gov. Culver's father, Sen. Culver, to set up the Iowa 2000 project. In his first term, Gov. Vilsack cloned it with Iowa 2010.

In 1978, Gov. Ray came up with a new theme 'progress with stability' as part of a larger effort throughout his administration to better connect Iowa's cities and towns with rural Iowa.

In small towns he would nudge with nuance 'stability with progress.' Bob Ray communicated deftly. He was transparent with and respected the press. He helped define modern Iowa and did define the modern Iowa governorship.

With Billie Ray and three active daughters, the five defined the modern Iowa First Family.

We thank you for supporting him, and for your sacrifice.

A governor's work is never easy. Gov. Ray's four successors, all with us today, have said privately and publicly, over time and this week, how much they respected him and his leadership.

Bill Clinton was the 32 year-old Gov.-elect of Arkansas when he met Bob Ray, then 50, at the NGA 'new governors school' in November '78.

The two hit it off. It was Ray 'charisma' and Clinton 'charisma on steroids.'

Clinton credited Ray with mentoring him on how to be a good governor. When he would come to Des Moines as President in the 90s; he would often ask about Bob Ray and word would get back to us. Wednesday, President Clinton tweeted a heartfelt remembrance of his mentor and friend.

Ray met one Pope . . . but worked with seven Presidents. There is apparently no public record of what Richard Nixon thought of him. The tape recorders must have been turned off.

President Ford said, 'I relied heavily on Bob's good advice.'

President Reagan: 'The success you experienced was the product of good ideas, hard work, a whole lot of follow through—just what you'd expect to find in Iowa.'

President George H. W. Bush said this well, 'He never turned his back on the Party, but somehow transcended Party and made public service better.'

Like Bush 41 and Jimmy Carter with their post-Presidencies, Bob Ray also defined the role of 'former' governor.

His ongoing service as CEO, mayor, and Drake president was exemplary. Ray backed countless charities and good works. Once I told him 'you've supported about everything except 'Iowans for Term Limits.'

To close, in the years ahead, governors and perhaps Presidents like Ronald Reagan was, will be in Room 9 of the Capitol. Gov. Branstad fittingly designated it the 'Robert D. Ray Conference Room.'

Governors have made many important decisions in that room, including Ray's to relocate and welcome legal political refugees to Iowa.

Future governors will see a large, wonderful oil painting of Gov. Ray. That portrait is behind me. It returns to the Governor's Office today.

Next year, or 2028, or 2046 (Iowa's Bicentennial year) or any year, governors will sit in the Ray Conference Room—coping with complicated, controversial, even morality laden decisions.

Our Iowans and future Iowans can hope those governors pause, in deliberative, decisive moments, look up at the portrait, and think . . .

What would Robert D. Ray do?
How would he lead?

EULOGY FOR GOVERNOR ROBERT D. RAY

AMBASSADOR KENNETH M. QUINN

One of the first refugees Governor Ray rescued and resettled in Iowa was a young man who was trapped in one of the most treacherous and threatening environments on earth—Washington, D.C. That person he rescued was me.

He brought me and my wife Le Son and our children home to Iowa where we became part of Governor Ray's extended family. For 4 years, I worked closely with the Governor on many of his humanitarian endeavors.

A few weeks ago, I was with Governor and Mrs. Ray recalling many of these experiences—and a flood of memories came back about when we were together, including:

—In the winter of 1975, at the celebration for the Tai Dam refugees from Laos, whom he had rescued and resettled together in Iowa in order to preserve their culture, language and kinship. The Tai Dam had written to every Governor in America, but Robert Ray was the only Governor to answer their plea. He convinced President Ford to permit all of the Tai Dam to come to Iowa. They have been here ever since.

—Or, on a cold January night in 1979, while he and I watched the video of a boat filled with Vietnamese 'boat people' refugees, who had escaped from Communist oppression only to be pushed back out to sea by local officials fearful of being inundated because no country in the world, including the United States, was accepting any more refugees from Indochina. We watched in horror as their boat broke up in the waves, with the refugees drowning before our eyes.

This so impacted Governor Ray that he wrote late that very night to the President, saying that Iowa would double the number of refugees it had resettled if only the President would reopen America's doors.

His letter and lobbying in Washington worked! America's doors were reopened.

—Six months later, in June 1979 we were together in Geneva, Switzerland, at the UN conference on the Boat People, where Vice President Walter Mondale announced that America would accept 168,000 new refugees each year. This led to over 1,000,000 refugees from Indochina eventually being resettled in the United States.

The assembled diplomatic delegations gave a spontaneous standing ovation to America's humanitarian leadership, a leadership that began when Robert D. Ray became the first governing official anywhere in the world to say he would accept the Boat People refugees.

—A few months later in October 1979, I was with Governor Ray at Living History Farm in Des Moines, as Pope John Paul II appeared before 350,000 people. Among those bringing the gifts to the Pope to celebrate Mass were Vietnamese Catholic refugees in their colorful native dress.

—Two weeks later the Governor and Mrs. Ray and I were at a place called Sa Kaew in Thailand where 30,000 victims of the Cambodian genocide were lying strewn across a field. Emaciated, starving and beset with disease, they were dying at the rate of 50–100 a day, with their bodies being bulldozed into mass graves.

—This scene of incredible human suffering led Governor Ray to create Iowa SHARES. Iowa Sends Help to Aid Refugees and End Starvation. With contributions by Iowans across the state, we rushed food and medicine that arrived on Christmas Day, to feed people who had been eating insects to survive. This was followed by volunteer Iowa doctors and nurses. Together this saved thousands of lives.

—On that same trip, we were in Nong Khai in Thailand, where the Tai Dam, Lao and Hmong refugees were waiting uncertain about their fate. These refugees said they wanted to show us their “symbol of hope.” They took us across a muddy field to a thatched hut. Beckoning us to look inside, they said “there is our symbol.” Tacked on the wall was the Iowa Department of Transportation highway map. Governor Robert Ray had made the shape of our state a symbol of hope for people languishing in a refugee camp 12,000 miles from Iowa.

—There was one other event where neither the Governor nor I were present but which has great meaning for today. In 2004, the Catholic Bishop of Des Moines visited a very ill Pope John Paul II. When the Bishop reminded the Pontiff of his visit to Living History Farms, the Pope heard “Iowa”—in a halting voice the frail Pope said—“Iowa . . . Farms . . . Refugees.” The man who put the words Iowa and Refugees on the lips of a dying Pope, and who made the shape of Iowa a symbol of hope around the world, was Governor Robert D. Ray.

The common thread in all of these experiences was that Governor Ray was driven by moral impulses planted deep inside him by his parents, the educational institutions he attended, and his religion, and nurtured by his wife Billie and his children.

When confronted by scenes of human suffering, Robert Ray responded, not as a political candidate doing an electoral calculation, but as a Christian following a moral imperative from the parable of the Good Samaritan.

—Robert D. Ray saw that his obligation was to his fellow human beings who were suffering and dying, even if the color of their skin, the language they spoke, and the religion they followed were all different from his own;

—Or, even if they were thousands and thousands of miles away on the other side of our planet, or adrift in the ocean.

Through his actions, Governor Robert Ray answered the eternal question—“Am I my brother's keeper?”

Even though the impact of Robert Ray's leadership would often occur far from Iowa; The one story that most poignantly captures Robert Ray's humanitarian legacy and his place in the pantheon of Iowa's greatest heroes took place about 10 years ago, not in the Governor's office or far from Iowa, but in a supermarket in West Des Moines.

As Governor Ray described it to me, he and Mrs. Ray were shopping for groceries, pushing their cart down the aisle, when, as can happen, they almost bumped into a cart being pushed by another shopper—in this case, an Asian man.

When he saw it was Governor Ray, the man stopped; walked over to the Governor and extending his hand, said “you saved my life. I just want to say thank you.”

Today thousands of Tai Dam, Lao, Hmong, Cambodians and Vietnamese who live in Iowa just want to say thank you. In a very real sense, Governor Robert Ray saved them all.

And all of us, whom he made so proud to say we are Iowans—we just want to say thank you.

Governor Ray uplifted my life. He uplifted all of our lives. And his legacy will uplift countless, thousands and thousands of others far into the future.

GOVERNOR ROBERT D. RAY—FAMILY EULOGY J. SCOTT RAECKER

On behalf of Mrs. Ray and the entire Ray family I want to express their sincere appreciation for the outpouring of love, support and prayers at this time. They have asked for me to share that following the service there will be a reception at The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center on the Drake campus—which is walking distance from the church.

So here we are Mrs. Ray, back at First Christian Church where your lifelong love story with Governor Ray started 73 years ago. You met through this church and church camp where you were elected King and Queen. You became high school sweethearts—you the smart looking girl with the car and Governor Ray the shy school-boy athlete.

Together we've looked at the pictures of the two of you in those early years—you and Governor Ray had a youthful twinkle in your eyes and a shining smile that said—“I'm in love”—and that's one thing that did not change over all these years.

Recently you told me that in the last several months it was just nice to sit and hold hands and tell each other “I love you”—and as I observed these moments, I saw that same twinkle and shining smile in both of you—and, oh my heavens, it still radiated—I'm so in love.

You also shared that you never had a fight—and I believe you. However, with all due respect, it has come to my attention through an un-named grandchild that there were a few disagreements—mostly over ice cream at McDonalds, and they were resolved with another Diet Coke and a loving grandpa slipping a dollar under the table to a very happy granddaughter.

In your understated way you told me he was a “special person”—which he was—and together you were spectacular . . . you were always his beloved Billie Lee—and you most certainly were his beloved soul mate.

Mrs. Ray, here is the message for the rest of us today—if there is an aspect of Governor Ray's life that should inspire us, and we should seek to emulate, it should be this—his excellence as a man devoted to his family—and that passion was rooted deeply in his faith, his love for you and his desire to serve others in love.

It's no secret that Governor Ray's favorite titles in life were husband, father and grand-

father—and he took them seriously—and with good humor.

It has been said that you can tell what kind of parent you are by how your grandchildren turn out—and how your children care for you as you age. And by all measures Mrs. Ray—you and the Governor were an extreme success.

Randi, Lu Ann and Vicki, he loved you girls—unconditionally. And, a gift he gave you . . . is that you all know that fact.

Whether singing out to you as his “Miss America” or, telling you at a time you needed to hear it the most, that “you are always beautiful in my eyes”—he loved you in actions that reflected his words.

And even when some boundaries needed to be set (you know what I'm talking about), that was also done in love, sometimes frustratingly so for you as he always wanted to talk things out and think through the best resolutions and consequences.

He was your hero, he was patient and calm, and even in the darkest moments he looked for the positive. He was inclusive as reflected best in his love for you son-in-laws.

And one of the things I have heard, and seen from you as daughters, and the grandchildren as well, is this—his admonition to “Do more, speak less—and if you have to speak, think before you speak.”

Now for you grandchildren, Robert, Jeffrey, Billie Ray, John, Michael, Emma, Leah and Sadie—he absolutely adored and cherished you—he was so proud of each of you. He talked more about you than anything else. And, he loved taking pictures of you.

I've watched you grow up directly, or through his stories, and see so many traits of him in each of you. In fact, you shared with me the traits you possess that you saw in your grandpa. And here they are, listen closely . . .

Empathy, kindness, humor, humility, honesty, sense of justice, respect, compassion, considerate, loyal, self-confident, attention to detail, positive, caring, adventurous spirit, modest, selfless, charisma, perseverance, appreciation for other cultures, a good and sometimes slow decision-maker, a genuine and good hearted person, never mad, peace-seeking and relationship centered.

And of course, love of ice cream and chocolate chip cookies.

You also shared that one of the qualities you admired most about him was that he was always “more interested in your opinion than telling you his opinion.” A good lesson for all of us.

And I loved this trait you shared—he adored my grandma—and so do I.

Think of this list for a minute—these are the traits that emanate from you—that is what a lasting legacy looks like. And each of you grandchildren will continue to make your lives, and the world, a better place because of these traits.

And, for the rest of us, these are qualities we also saw in your grandpa that continue to shape our lives.

When you unpack the list and look deeply into the character qualities you share with your grandpa—there is something that resonates clearly—and for your grandpa it was developed in this church early in his life.

They are called “fruits of the Spirit”—they are found in Galatians 5 and they define your grandfather's life—they are “love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

Of these fruits of Governor Ray's spirit, love was first and foremost—and the fruits of his spirit were these words . . . in action.

Mrs. Ray, Randi, Lu Ann, Vicki, grandchildren, and the entire family—Governor Ray's family legacy lives on in you and is a lesson for all of us.

His faith driven love served us all—and while most directly to you the family—he

also served those of us who were blessed to call him a friend.

Governor Ray loved quotes and we shared many over the years. One that I gave him that he liked was from Richard Bach who said:

"The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life. Rarely do members of one family grow up under the same roof."

I thought of this quote as I spoke with Tai Dam refugee and family friend, Som Baccam, this week when she referred to Governor Ray as her 'savior'—and he literally was.

Savior is a strong and powerful word, and when I reflect on times Governor Ray used that word in our discussions about faith—he talked about how his Savior demonstrated unconditional love—sacrificial love—service love—so that we could love others and know our eternal home.

Governor Ray has left our earthly home and created a void in our lives . . . and that hurts, however, I would challenge us to think that the real void would be if we had never had his presence in our lives.

Governor Ray set the standard for how to treat people . . . and we can all be better people if we look to Governor Ray as a model.

For me, and I hope for each of you, I want to be a better person each day because of Governor Ray and his presence in my life. I've felt that way since the day I met him . . . and I will for the rest of my life.

The inspiration of Governor Ray's life is that we shine our light in the lives of others when we demonstrate love—and we must remember to shine that light first and foremost with our family and friends.

I challenge us all to honor his legacy by aspiring to be better people—by shining our light in our homes, with our family—and with our friends.

Letting our light shine may be his most important lesson.

One more time—Governor Ray leading the way.

REMEMBERING EUGENE SUKUP

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I wish to recognize a friend, an agricultural innovator, an inventor with I think about 80 patents. His name is Eugene Sukup.

If you travel around the Midwest, you will see there are grain operations on a lot of family farms. If you go to Haiti, as a result of the catastrophe down there a few years ago, you will see how smaller buildings that we would call grain storage facilities in Iowa serve as homes for homeless people. That resulted from that catastrophe.

Eugene Sukup is a quintessential bootstrap American success story. After settling in Iowa during the Dust Bowl and serving his Nation as a sergeant in the National Guard, Eugene made his living as a farmer, earning the title of "Franklin County Outstanding Farmer" in his younger years, in 1962.

While working on his farm, like a lot of farmers, he tried to think of easier ways to do things. He observed that pockets of grain—particularly corn—housed in storage bins could overheat and, as a result, spoil. Understanding the depth and breadth of the problem for farmers across the country, he was determined to find a solution, and he did. Through trial and error, along

with gritty determination and ingenuity, Eugene came up with something he entitled the "Stirway Stirring Machine." The innovative technology automated the process of stirring stored grain and corn and became an instant success among his fellow farmers. Eugene patented his invention and founded the Sukup Manufacturing Company in 1963.

Through my years holding annual meetings in each of Iowa's 99 counties, Sukup Manufacturing from time to time has hosted the meetings I have in Franklin County. After a tour of the factory, I always enjoyed Eugene's allowing his employees to have an open Q&A session with me so that I could hear what is on the minds of my constituents, because these constituents can't afford to leave their jobs and come to the courthouse to ask me questions. I try to go to people like them to make the process of a representative government work, and the best way to do that is face-to-face with your constituents.

Getting back to Sukup Manufacturing, by words and deeds, it is very clear that Sukup Manufacturing is a great place to work and a devoted contributor to the local community and global philanthropy. Fifty-five years later, the Sukup Manufacturing Company—which was the idea of a small family farmer—holds over 80 patents and sells its products in more than 85 countries. It remains the largest family-owned, full-line grain system manufacturer, employing more than 700 employees in the community of Sheffield, IA, and if I had to guess its population, I would say it is around 1,500.

Eugene's pioneering invention contributed to the success of tens of thousands of farming operations, allowing farmers to safely store their grain on their farms to capture the best market price. We have Sukup grain bins on my own family farm near Waterloo, IA; more specifically, the little village in New Hartford, IA. His ingenuity is a perfect example of the opportunity America's economic system gives people with ideas and drive.

Eugene's legacy spans Iowa's landscape from the Mississippi River to the Missouri River and reaches beyond the borders of our State and the borders of the United States. Sukup Manufacturing stepped up to reconfigure grain bins into housing units, as I previously said, for hurricane-ravaged Haiti. The units withstand 140-mile-per-hour winds, providing a safe habitat for residents.

In 2006, Eugene was inducted into Iowa's Inventors Hall of Fame and received the Outstanding Innovation Award by the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers. He was inducted into Iowa's Business Hall of Fame in 2011 and was named a Legend in Manufacturing by Elevate Advanced Manufacturing in 2015.

Through Eugene and its leaders, the Sukup family business has been a constant voice for job creation and oppor-

tunity. His contribution to manufacturing, agriculture, and the entire rural community and our economy will be an asset to farmers and the agriculture community for generations to come. It is amazing to think of what can happen in rural and small towns throughout our country thanks to the successful enterprise that Eugene Sukup represents.

Throughout our decades-long friendship, I have admired his relentless work ethic and unwavering commitment to community and family. His civil, political, and community leadership sets a very high bar for the rest of us in America.

Eugene was an American inventor, innovator, and a great friend. He will be greatly missed. May God bless him and his beloved family.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise in strong opposition to the nomination of Ryan Bounds to be a judge on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. Bounds, who, if confirmed, would serve on a Ninth Circuit seat in the State of Oregon, has received zero blue slips. He is opposed by both Senators from the State in which he would sit if confirmed.

Never before in the 100-year history of blue slips has a nominee been confirmed over the opposition of both home-State Senators. The Republican majority is setting a precedent here, and all of our home States are at risk of being impacted by this.

By moving this nominee without blue slips, Republicans are diminishing the voice that home-State constituents have through their Senators in the process of selecting judges in their States.

Let me make it clear to my Republican colleagues: If you vote to confirm Ryan Bounds, you are consenting to a precedent that is likely to affect your state someday. Consider your vote carefully.

It is hard to understand why my Republican colleagues would abandon the blue slip for the sake of this particular nominee. Mr. Bounds has written and published articles that should disqualify him from consideration for a Federal judgeship.

Consider how the Multnomah Bar Association in Oregon—a bar association that Mr. Bounds has belonged to for 12 years—described Mr. Bounds' articles in a statement after the writings were revealed.

The association said Bounds' writings "express insensitive, intolerant, and disdainful views toward racial and ethnic minorities, campus sexual assault victims, and the LGBTQ community."

The statement went on to say that the bar association "strongly disavows the views expressed in those articles as racist, misogynistic, homophobic and disparaging of survivors of sexual assault and abuse."

Mr. Bounds' writings, which he published in college, included his discussions about the "more strident racial factions of the student body."

His writings mocked LGBTQ students for being sensitive when a group of drunk athletes vandalized a statue celebrating gay pride.

He mocked Latino students for being overly sensitive when they complained about the termination of a Latino administrator.

Then he wrote this, in an article about sexual assault on campus: "There is really nothing inherently wrong with the University failing to punish an alleged rapist—regardless his guilt—in the absence of adequate certainty; there is nothing that the University can do to objectively ensure that the rapist does not strike again. Only the legal system can do that, and if it lacks the certainty to do so, it is not necessarily up to the University to stick it to the suspect, anyway, just in case. Expelling students is probably not going to contribute a great deal toward a rape victim's recovery; there is no moral imperative to risk egregious error in doing so."

Not only did Mr. Bounds publish these writings, but he chose not to share his writings with Oregon's judicial selection committee even though the committee had asked him to disclose any potentially controversial materials.

Mr. Bounds said he didn't think he needed to disclose any information to the committee that preceded his time at law school.

As Senators WYDEN and MERKLEY pointed out in a letter to Chairman GRASSLEY, Mr. Bounds did share with the Oregon committee information about his high school days. He just conveniently left out his intolerant publications from college.

As Senators WYDEN and MERKLEY said in their letter, "Mr. Bounds' failure to disclose these writings, and the nature of these writings themselves, demonstrate a substantial lack of judgment that is unsuitable for a nominee for a lifetime appointment."

This is not a close call. The Senate should not be moving forward with Mr. Bounds' nomination on process or substance.

Republicans are failing to be responsible stewards of nominations. The fact that Senate Republicans are moving forward with this nomination is a troubling sign for how Republicans will handle the Supreme Court vacancy.

All too often, Senate Republicans are failing to serve as a meaningful check and balance on President Trump when it comes to nominations.

Last week, 50 Senate Republicans voted to confirm an unqualified lawyer who had represented a suspicious Russian bank as the head of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

This week Republicans already voted to confirm Andrew Oldham, a 39-year-old circuit court nominee who refused to say whether he thought Brown v. Board of Education was correctly decided and who has described the Supreme Court as "the most dangerous branch."

Now, Senate Republicans are looking to confirm Mr. Bounds, who has shown terrible judgment with his published writings and with his failure to be forthcoming about them.

Senators have a constitutional obligation to scrutinize these nominees and to vote no if the nominees lack the experience, temperament, or judgment to be a fair and impartial judge. The Senate should not be a rubberstamp, but under President Trump, all too often, it has been.

I know Senate Republicans like to say it is unfair to nominees if we hold them accountable for their records. My Republican colleagues have been coming to the floor, day after day, complaining about what they see as unfair scrutiny of the Kavanaugh Supreme Court nomination.

Do they have amnesia? I would remind them that no Supreme Court nominee in history has ever been treated worse than Merrick Garland was treated by Senate Republicans in 2016. Senator MCCONNELL wouldn't even allow Judge Garland a hearing or the courtesy of a meeting.

The treatment of Merrick Garland was unprecedented, and it was disrespectful. His record and reputation were torn apart by Republicans who never gave him a chance to respond in an open hearing. Even Judge Bork got a hearing and a vote.

I hope my Republican colleagues are not going to simply rubberstamp President Trump's nominees. So many of these nominees are extreme. We need to review their full records and consider them carefully before voting to confirm them for life.

I have carefully considered Mr. Bounds' nomination, and I will vote no. I urge my colleagues in both parties to join me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

CUBA

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise today to give tribute to the spirit of the Cuban people—the people of my forefathers, who still live under a corrupt and violent Communist regime—and to honor the memory of Oswaldo Paya. Oswaldo was a champion for freedom. He died 6 years ago this Sunday, on July 22, 2012, in a car crash that is widely believed to have been orchestrated by the Castro regime.

The plight of the brave people of Cuba has been marked by terrible suffering under both the Castro regime and the brutal dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista before it. The Castros and their revolutionary terrorist lackeys, like Che Guevara, are responsible for the suffering and murder of countless innocent Cubans. It is because of these oppressors that my family fled their beloved home in Cuba for a better life in the United States.

My father, born and raised in Cuba, fought in the revolution, initially believing that the principles of freedom were what the revolution was all about. He fought against Batista, a

cruel dictator, and he was imprisoned and tortured by Batista's thugs.

Then my aunt, his younger sister, my tia Sonia—who was there after the revolution succeeded, who discovered along with the rest of the world that Fidel Castro was a Communist, who saw the torture and the murder—my aunt fought in the counterrevolution against Fidel Castro, and she, too, like her brother, was imprisoned and tortured, except this time by Castro's thugs.

Both my father and my aunt were kids. They were kids who believed they were fighting for freedom, and they discovered they went from one tyrant to an even worse tyrant, a Communist dictator who would line up dissidents and shoot them.

The betrayal, the brutality, and the violence experienced by my father and by my aunt were all too typical of the millions of Cubans who have suffered under the Castro regime of the last six decades. Fidel may be dead, Raul may be retired, but the evil of the Castros persists. It still molds the Cuban regime's fundamental opposition to truth, to freedom, and to human rights.

But the malice and menace of communism cannot break down the will of the Cuban people. Instead, it has strengthened their resolve. It has further united them to fight for freedom and build a better future for their country, to establish a free Cuba—a Cuba not streaked by the ashes of dissident literature or littered with the corpses of defenseless teenagers; a Cuba built on human decency and individual liberty, where citizens are heard, not murdered, and speech is protected, not silenced. It is the Cuba envisioned by Oswaldo Paya Sardinias, his Christian Liberation Movement, and their fellow activists who continue to stand against the Castro regime. It is the Cuba of the young bloggers who expose the regime's crimes and corruption at the risk of arrest, deportation, torture, or worse.

With time, the oppressions of the Castro regime gave rise to remarkable leaders like Oswaldo Paya, whose life's work was the peaceful overthrow of communism and whose legacy we honor today. Oswaldo dedicated his life to promoting democratic freedoms and human rights in Cuba. His memory continues to inspire dissidents in Cuba and in other countries under tyrannical rule, countries like Venezuela, where Nicolas Maduro routinely imprisons and murders those who dare speak out against him, or Nicaragua, where the corrupt Ortega regime desperately clings to power by persecuting journalists and violently putting down protesters.

Last year, I introduced legislation to commemorate Oswaldo's legacy by naming the street in front of the Embassy of Cuba, located right here in Washington, as "Oswaldo Paya Way." It would send a powerful statement that here in the United States of America, we stand with freedom fighters

like Oswaldo Paya who are working to bring hope and liberty to oppressed nations, who are working to make a better Cuba, free of the horrors of Communist rule.

I have never been to my father's homeland. I have never been to Cuba. My father has not returned to Cuba in over 60 years. I look forward to one day visiting Cuba, hopefully with my dad, with my tia Sonia, my cousin Bibi, with my whole family, my two girls, and seeing a free Cuba—where people can live according to their beliefs without fear of imprisonment, violence, or oppression, but today is not that day.

There are many, like Oswaldo, who have fought for this vision for a free Cuba, who are no longer with us, but their struggle will endure, and their spirits will shine a light through the darkest nights. We will never forget them, nor cease fighting to bring about the free Cuba they died for. Today, and on July 22, and each day thereafter, they will be remembered, "Viva Cuba libre."

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, soon, the Senate will vote on the Ryan Bounds nomination, and I want to make sure each Member of the Senate is aware of two important issues as they prepare to cast their votes on the Bounds nomination to serve on the Ninth Circuit.

First, Mr. Bounds flagrantly misrepresented his background to our bipartisan Oregon judicial selection committee. This is the committee that was tasked with vetting his nomination—a process I have worked on with Republicans for literally two decades. I was pleased to work with our former colleague Senator Smith on this. I worked with the late Mark Hatfield on this. Now it is a pleasure to work with Senator MERKLEY, and the bipartisan efforts we have had produced this selection, a process. Mr. Bounds misrepresented—in my view, really lied—as he covered up disturbing, intolerant writings from his past.

Among many hateful matters he wrote about, he defended homophobic vandals who damaged a gay pride monument. He argued against efforts to protect the survivors of sexual assault on college campuses because, he wrote, he didn't think that would guarantee absolute safety.

As I indicated earlier, what outraged me, and shocked me, was his comparison of organizations that promote multiculturalism and tolerance in America to Nazi rallies. I am the child of Jewish parents who fled Nazi terror in Germany. Not all of our family got out. My great Uncle Max was among the last to be gassed at Auschwitz. For Mr. Bounds to compare groups that lift up minorities in America to Nazis is an extraordinary and dark stain on his character. For him to have concealed these writings from Oregon's bipartisan selection committee is disqualifying.

He never acknowledged these writings until they were uncovered and then posed a threat to his nomination. To this day, he has not fully recanted the abhorrent views that are reflected in that content. Five of the seven members of the bipartisan judicial selection committee, including the Chair, said recently they would not have included Mr. Bounds among their recommended candidates had they known about the writings as he was vetted.

Our bipartisan committee forwarded Mr. Bounds' name, along with others, as part of this process, and they said if Mr. Bounds had been straight with them, he would have told them about these offensive writings, but he misled them by keeping that secret.

The second issue, this is the first time in the 101-year history of what is called the blue-slip process where a nomination moved forward without a blue slip from either home State Senator. Senator MERKLEY and I withheld our blue slips specifically because of what I described, these lies about omission. We didn't consent to a hearing, a debate on the floor, but Chairman GRASSLEY and Majority Leader MCCONNELL barreled right ahead.

Leader MCCONNELL even told the New York Times that blue slips ought to be viewed as nothing more than an indication of how Senators might vote on a given nominee. That was not the tune Republicans were singing in 2009. Democrats then occupied the Oval Office, held the gavel of the Judiciary Committee, and every Member—every Member—of this body who sat on that side of the Chamber in the Republican conference sent a letter to President Obama and then-Chairman LEAHY saying that the nomination's process was "needlessly acrimonious." They wanted to return to an era of bipartisanship. Then, they said:

We hope your Administration will consult with us as it considers possible nominations to the federal courts from our states. Regretfully, if we are not consulted on, and approve of, a nomination from our states, the Republican Conference will be unable to support moving forward to that nominee.

In 2009, while in the minority, everyone who sat on that side of the Chamber rushed to defend blue slips as a statement of senatorial courtesy and collegiality. What a difference a few years makes.

What is happening now cheapens the advice and consent role of the Senate, something delegated to us by the Founding Fathers. The White House wants the Senate to act as a rubberstamp on whatever nominees are sent our way. The majority seems perfectly willing to go along with that.

My colleagues on the other side need to be aware of the new reality—this new reality where the blue slips don't matter—they are creating. This is going to be the end of the blue-slip process as it has worked in the Senate to promote good government on both sides of the aisle. This breach of a cen-

tury of bipartisan protocol is going to further drive the judiciary to the partisan extremes.

As we consider this nomination in a few minutes, this means lights-out—lights-out—for this important bipartisan tradition. The nominee we will be voting on concealed disturbing, intolerant writings from his past, misleading the bipartisan committee that reviewed his candidacy. Moving his nomination forward, in the face of that information and without the blue slips from Senator MERKLEY and myself, destroys more than a century of bipartisan tradition and certainly expands the power of the executive branch of the President.

What we learned earlier this week is it would take only one U.S. Senator on the other side—of all the people sitting over there, it would take only one to stop this abomination of a process. I hope one of my colleagues will be swayed by the horrendous writings Mr. Bounds lied to conceal.

This has been a sad moment for the Senate and a rejection of the kind of bipartisanship this body ought to bring to judicial nominations, the kind of bipartisanship I have been honored to be part of in Oregon for two decades. I urge my colleagues to vote no on the Bounds nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Michigan.

FAST-GROWING STARTUP COMPANIES

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, when you think about fast-growing startup companies, you might think about Silicon Valley, Boston, or Boulder. Though all these cities certainly have very vibrant ecosystems, innovative startups and small businesses are launching and growing across the United States, including in my home State of Michigan.

In every State, there are hard-working entrepreneurs who have established job-creating startups. These dynamic companies act as business leaders, innovators, and job creators within our communities.

This is why I am working with Senators WARREN, TILLIS, and SCOTT to commemorate Startup Week Across America and celebrate the ingenuity and entrepreneurship in our States and across the country. I kicked off this annual event in 2013 while serving in the House of Representatives. In the years since, I have had the privilege of visiting startups in Grand Rapids, Detroit, and Traverse City.

I have met with business founders who code apps for Fortune 500 companies, design and produce high-end jeans and other denim products, and grow and deliver farm-fresh products.

This Monday I visited Ferris Wheel, a new coworking space in Flint, MI, a community of hard-working Michiganders who are focused on their future.

The people of Flint are committed to building a stronger, healthier, more prosperous community, and they are

committed to doing it together. You can see this in their schools and their churches and nonprofits, and you can see this in their startups and small businesses.

One of the best parts about starting a business in Flint is 100K Ideas, a non-profit staffed by university students committed to helping entrepreneurs start their companies. This group is named in honor of the 100,000 residents of Flint and inspired by the thought that if they could pull one idea from every local resident, they could change the world.

This week, I had the chance to learn about a few of these new ideas. I met Kiara Tyler, the founder of Kalm Clothing. She moved the furniture out of her apartment to make room for inventory and stocked boxes of overalls and track suits where her couch used to be, while using her car as the company's headquarters. Now Kiara has done over \$100,000 worth of business. She is selling her clothing online, and she has space for her office and inventory at Ferris Wheel. Flint is her home, and she is excited to stay and to build her business in Michigan.

I learned about Article One Eyewear, a company that has taken on office space next door to her. They sell handcrafted eyeglasses and donate a portion of their proceeds to combat vitamin A deficiency and to fight blindness in developing nations.

I also met with SkyPoint Ventures, a true homegrown Michigan story. While they are a for-profit investment fund, they have also committed to social benefit projects and making Flint a better place to live and to do business. In addition to investing in companies like Article One, SkyPoint renovated the Ferris Building to create the Ferris Wheel coworking space and commit to the growing community of startups in the city of Flint.

Successful business growth comes down to matching talent to capital, and the United States does this better than any other country in the world. I am proud to say that I had a chance to see this happening firsthand in Flint and across the State of Michigan.

Michigan, in fact, has one of the fastest growing venture capital communities in the entire Nation, a critical asset that will help us become the startup capital of the Midwest. We have world-class colleges and universities, more engineers per capita than any other part of the country, and the infrastructure to export not just nationally but global as well.

I know that if we keep pulling together as a community and harness 100,000 ideas and beyond, Flint's future is bright. I know that Michigan's small businesses and startups will help to lead the way to new innovations that will revolutionize our economy.

I am committed to ensuring that our growing startup communities will be a fixture of creativity, innovation, and job creation for decades to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, today I rise to voice my support for the brave men and women of America's Immigration and Customs Enforcement, also known as ICE. Unfortunately, a resolution that would have shown this body's unanimous support for these courageous individuals was blocked.

While the Border Patrol has the important mission of maintaining security at our borders, ICE agents have the critical mission of enforcing immigration laws inside the United States. These two work hand in hand. Our Nation cannot have border security without enforcing our laws inside communities, and we cannot have secure communities without enforcing our laws at our borders.

The critical mission of ICE goes far beyond just immigration enforcement. These folks are on the frontlines of our homeland security.

Here is just a short list of the types of activities ICE is involved in: one, investigating and combating drug smuggling, pretty important; stopping human trafficking; preventing gang-related crimes; and working with other law enforcement entities to stop criminal and terrorist networks from operating.

Iowa, along with the rest of the country, has been gripped by an opioid crisis that puts our people and our safety at risk. Additionally, we continue to have a very grave methamphetamine issue that threatens the core of many of our already struggling rural communities.

We need ICE to help stop the flow of these drugs into Iowa's communities, our schools, our workplaces, and to our children and our families. In 2017 alone, ICE enforcement and removal operations seized nearly 1 million pounds of narcotics—1 million pounds of narcotics seized by ICE. Abolishing ICE would turn the flow of illegal drugs across the border from a stream into a monsoon.

I also implore anyone challenging the need for ICE to look at the horrendous toll of human trafficking: young and innocent women and men, boys and girls used as human pawns, smuggled across the border with hopes of a better life, forced into prostitution or worse—raped, beaten, subjected to sexual diseases and stripped of all innocence and dignity.

Sadly, human trafficking is a major issue in Iowa. In 2016, for instance, Des Moines was identified as one of the country's top 100 human trafficking locations. That information came to us from our good friends at Polaris, which is an anti-trafficking organization.

Human traffickers often exploit our immigration laws to transport their victims, and our ICE agents are the ones who help to stop them and to stop their illicit activities.

Every day, 24/7, 365 days a year, ICE agents are on the frontlines. They are

working to dismantle human trafficking networks and protect our most vulnerable.

I urge my colleagues to reconsider their objections and to support not only the resolution but to support those officers and personnel who carry out the vital mission of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in order to ensure the safety and security of all Americans.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRUMP-PUTIN SUMMIT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss what is on so many Americans' minds today and the last couple of days—President Trump's recent trip to Europe, his meeting with Vladimir Putin, and his comments about Russia's interference in our elections.

So many Pennsylvanians—and I am sure this is true in every other State—have called or written to our office this week in complete disbelief asking: What is next? Where do we go from here?

These are good questions. They are critically important questions.

This President's views on Russia's past actions and the way forward have seemed to change every day this week.

Rather than focus on the news cycle following the Helsinki summit, I want to take a minute to review where things stood before—before—the President went to Europe.

Relations between the United States and Russia have been deteriorating for some time. We know that. The Russian Federation is clearly and unequivocally our adversary. Vladimir Putin envisions a world more closely resembling the Cold War era, certainly, than compared to today's realities, and he works toward a resurgence of Russian power and influence every day.

Just take a few examples. Russia attacked, annexed, and continues to illegally occupy Crimea. Russian-backed forces continue to violate cease-fire agreements in Ukraine and destabilize other parts of that country, preventing the Ukrainian people from fulfilling their dream of a secure and prosperous nation.

Russia is backing and enabling the murderous Assad regime in Syria. The conflict has emboldened terrorist groups, had dramatic humanitarian impacts, and has threatened the region's stability. As many as a half million people have been killed, and half the country has been displaced.

Just imagine if half of our population, say 150 million people, were displaced from their homes, sometimes to another part of the country and sometimes to a completely different country. That is the reality in Syria since

2011, and Russia has prolonged and exacerbated the Syrian people's suffering for its own power projection.

No. 4, Russia is also developing a stronger relationship with the Iranian regime and is reportedly considering arms sales and boosting their economic relationship. This threatens not only our national security interests in the Middle East but also those security interests of our staunchest ally, Israel.

Finally, Russia continues to have a substantial nuclear arsenal. It has violated the INF Treaty, and according to the Defense Department, is developing low-yield, nonstrategic nuclear weapons that could threaten our allies and partners.

Russia uses any number of tools, from manipulation of the energy supply to arms sales, to loans and aid to promote its brand of corrupt authoritarian governance around the world. It also employs nefarious means like hacking, espionage, and sowing false information to meddle in the most fundamental parts of our great democracy—our elections and, of course, those of other countries.

I don't think it is wrong for a United States President to meet with a hostile foreign leader. That is part of the job.

What is dead wrong is to sit across from a hostile foreign leader, one on one, with no notes, no staff, and to fail completely—completely—at your core mission, your job, which is protecting the national security interests of the American people.

To many people, it might seem odd to be focused on who was or wasn't in the room or whether any notes were taken, but without them, there is absolutely no accountability for what was said. We hear that the Russian military—let me say that again—the Russian military is ready to start implementing the agreements reached between President Trump and Vladimir Putin in that room.

We have to ask the President of the United States, what agreements? What did you agree to in that room? What did the leader of our Nation agree to that the Russian military is so eager to start implementing?

Further, there seems to have been some discussion between President Trump and Vladimir Putin about the Russian Government's interest in interrogating U.S. citizens, like former Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul. Yesterday, we heard the White House say the President was giving that absurd proposal serious consideration. Of course Putin wants to question Ambassador McFaul. He is an expert on Russia who served our country honorably as Ambassador and as a public servant. He stood up to Russian aggression and promoted U.S. national security interests, especially when they contradicted Moscow's agenda.

The idea that we would entertain handing over an American citizen to an authoritarian Russian Government with no rule of law and no history of treating people fairly—and, of course,

with a history of interrogating and torturing political opponents—that is not only insulting to our values, it is dangerous and it is wrong. That is not America. No official in our government—of any branch of government—should support that. If the administration tries it, the Congress should take every effort to stop them from doing that.

The Russian threat is serious and persistent. It isn't solved by one meeting and a press conference. It will take sustained commitment from the national security professionals across our government, and it will take real vision and leadership from the President and his Cabinet. I do not object to meeting with an adversary, nor does anyone. That is part of the job of being President. Instead, what I am concerned about, what a lot of Americans are concerned about, is this President's conduct during and after that meeting, especially his unwillingness to say without reservation or caveat that Russia was responsible for hacking our elections in 2016 and continues to meddle in our democratic process. This isn't a political judgment; it is the judgment of our intelligence and law enforcement experts, and it led to the indictment of 12 Russian military intelligence hackers this past Friday.

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats reaffirmed this judgment just this week, saying:

The role of the Intelligence Community is to provide the best information and fact-based assessments possible for the President and policymakers. We have been clear in our assessments of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and their ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy, and we will continue to provide unvarnished and objective intelligence in support of our national security.

So said the Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats.

Why can't the President say this and say it repeatedly, that he agrees with their assessment and is working to stop Russia from doing it again?

My constituents, like so many Americans, were right to ask: Where do we go from here? There is no playbook for this scenario.

I believe we must act in a bipartisan fashion to make clear to Russia that the U.S. Congress will not stand for continued interference in our elections and will work to counter them on other fronts.

First, we should enact new legislation to levy sanctions on Russian entities responsible for this malicious behavior and demand the administration fully implement legislation that was passed with an overwhelming bipartisan majority last year. No. 2, we must pass legislation to protect the special counsel and to shine a bright light on the dark money in politics. No. 3, we must fully fund State and municipal efforts to shore up our electoral systems. No. 4, we must speak out in support of our alliances. Many of our closest international partners are right on the frontlines of Russia's desta-

bilizing actions. Finally, we should insist that the administration answer the questions so many of us have about what happened in that room in Helsinki and what they plan to do to counter Russia and protect our national security interests.

We are in uncharted waters in terms of the actions of the President. His actions the last 2 weeks have made us less safe. I will say it again—less safe. He must take decisive action to guarantee our security by confronting malign Russian aggression against the United States and our NATO allies and partners. At the same time, Congress, both parties, both Houses, must act to protect our security and make it clear to the President that this branch of government will continue to discharge its constitutional duties.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. President.

I would like to acknowledge that the Senator from Pennsylvania has made a number of good points on the subject of Russia and the way we need to go with Russia.

People have asked me about what I think about Mr. Putin and whether he is trustworthy, and I tell them no. The way that I know he is misleading the public on the issues of meddling is because his lips are moving. He is not just telling the truth. Any time he talks about it, it just flies in the face of Federal investigations, oversight hearings, and classified briefings we have been involved in. I think it is an example of where Members of Congress have really come together on an issue. KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER AND ENFORCE THE LAW ACT

Mr. President, now I would like to talk about another issue that I would like Members of Congress to come together on, and it is called the Keeping Families Together and Enforce the Law Act.

You have heard a lot of reports recently about children being separated from their families at the border, and the administration has taken a position, in part prompted by lawsuits, and we can debate whether the administration should fix this problem through an Executive order, but how about this.

Why doesn't Congress act to provide long-term certainty through an act of Congress to make absolutely certain that children who cross the border with their families can be kept with their families while we are trying to determine in a court whether that family has a legitimate claim to asylum?

It sounds fairly simple. In fact, it is pretty simple. I met with Senators FEINSTEIN, Senator DURBIN, and Senator CRUZ. We sat down, and we discussed a way to actually get this into law. We all agreed it needs to be very narrowly focused.

The problem with immigration around here and the immigration subject is it gets really big and really complex really quickly. What happens with

big and complex on Capitol Hill is nothing gets done.

So the bill we propose is very simple. Fix the issues in the law, clarify the process so we can actually make absolutely certain that minor children can stay with their parents while their asylum claims are being considered.

We have had agreement on virtually everything. We have agreed that families should be kept together. We have agreed that we need more judges so we can reduce the backlog. We agreed we need more attorneys to participate in the process—basically a 2-to-1 ratio between a new judge and new attorneys to support the legal process. We agreed on minimum standards for housing so we make sure we are keeping these families in a place that we think are appropriate.

Some people may come to the floor and say we are going to stand up tent cities and subject people to harsh conditions. We don't want to do that. As a matter of fact, we feel so strongly about it that we are putting forth specific requirements for housing. So we are addressing the judge constraint, we are addressing the lawyer constraint, we are addressing specific standards for keeping families together.

We can actually pass this in a heartbeat. We can do it on the Senate floor, and we can do it through what is called unanimous consent. Allow somebody to come down here, put a bill forward, and get it passed. Give those children and parents certainty.

The fact is, some of them are going to apply for asylum and will not have a legitimate case. Others will, but we have proposed a bill that will prevent any sort of lengthy detention. As a matter of fact, if this bill gets passed, the average case with a family would be prioritized. If you have an asylum request and you are with children, we want to keep you together and get it at the front of the docket so you can get certainty fairly quickly—over 40 to 60 days, but we have a constraint we have to get past. It has to do with a court ruling called the Flores case, where if we don't narrowly tailor the language to say, if a child—if a minor comes across the border with their parents, then they will be allowed to be kept with their parents in appropriate housing until such time as their asylum request has been heard before a court of law. It is not getting rid of Flores. You have some people here saying we want to completely eliminate the case. That is not the case.

We don't want children coming across the border who don't have parents with them to be retained in perpetuity or indefinite detention, as it is referred to down there. That is what Flores does. So if a child comes across the border, and they don't have a parent with them, then after 20 days, they have to be placed somewhere other than detention. That is a good policy.

If you have a situation where Flores stands the way that it is, then the law specifically requires the child to be

separated from the parents. This gives the parents the choice. If they want the children with them while they are going through the legal process, then they can have that. If they choose to have the child placed with a family member or a guardian, then they can have that too.

One of the things that I think we have to talk more about is the danger of just randomly placing children with a parent or guardian who comes across the border. We have several cases where in our system there is no way we would place the child with some of the people they are coming across the border with. They have been convicted for a variety of things: child neglect, child abuse, drug trafficking. All sorts of things that would have an American citizen's child removed from their family are the same sort of standards we want for a child coming across the border. Of course, we want to make sure the parent who says they are their parent or guardian really is.

So in this body, there are few opportunities where you can narrowly tailor a policy to a point to where only the most partisan or unreasonable person wouldn't support it. This is one of them. We can get this bill passed, sent to the President's desk, and provide certainty—a compassionate, appropriate method for dealing with what are now hundreds of thousands of people who have come across the border—to children with their parents. Treat them fairly, treat them justly, and have them processed in what I believe is the greatest judicial system that has ever existed.

It is on us to solve this problem. Anybody who comes down here and says, well, no, I have to talk about DACA, which is something I support, a path to citizenship or I want to talk about border security, which I also support—yes, let's talk about that, but let's not hold these children and these families hostage for other immigration matters. This body should have the backbone to deal with the political challenges that may come from their own party and do the right thing—the next time.

This time, let's solve the separation of children from their parents. Let's stop playing the political games that make for great fodder, but they are not compassionate, they are not a part of the solution. I hope we have enough Members to become a part of the solution. Next week, we will be talking more about this and possibly through unanimous consent.

I want somebody to come down to this floor and explain to me why it is a bad idea. I want them to explain it to the American people, but, out of respect for the Senate, we will not offer a unanimous consent request today, but you can be pretty sure we will next week.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the Bounds nomination be vitiated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. For the information of all Senators, the nomination will be withdrawn.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 584 as under the previous order and that I then be permitted to speak briefly about it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE AGAINST THE MAKING AVAILABLE OF CURRENT AND FORMER DIPLOMATS, OFFICIALS, AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES FOR QUESTIONING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF VLADIMIR PUTIN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session to consider the following resolution, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 584) expressing the sense of the Senate against the making available of current and former diplomats, officials, and members of the Armed Forces of the United States for questioning by the government of Vladimir Putin.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am hopeful that we will come together on this resolution, which I introduced with the Senator from New Jersey and the Senator from Hawaii, that it is neither the policy nor the practice of the United States to submit our citizens, let alone our Ambassadors, to the interrogation of a foreign adversary.

Let this resolution be a warning to the administration that Congress will not allow this to happen. I call on President Trump to say once and for